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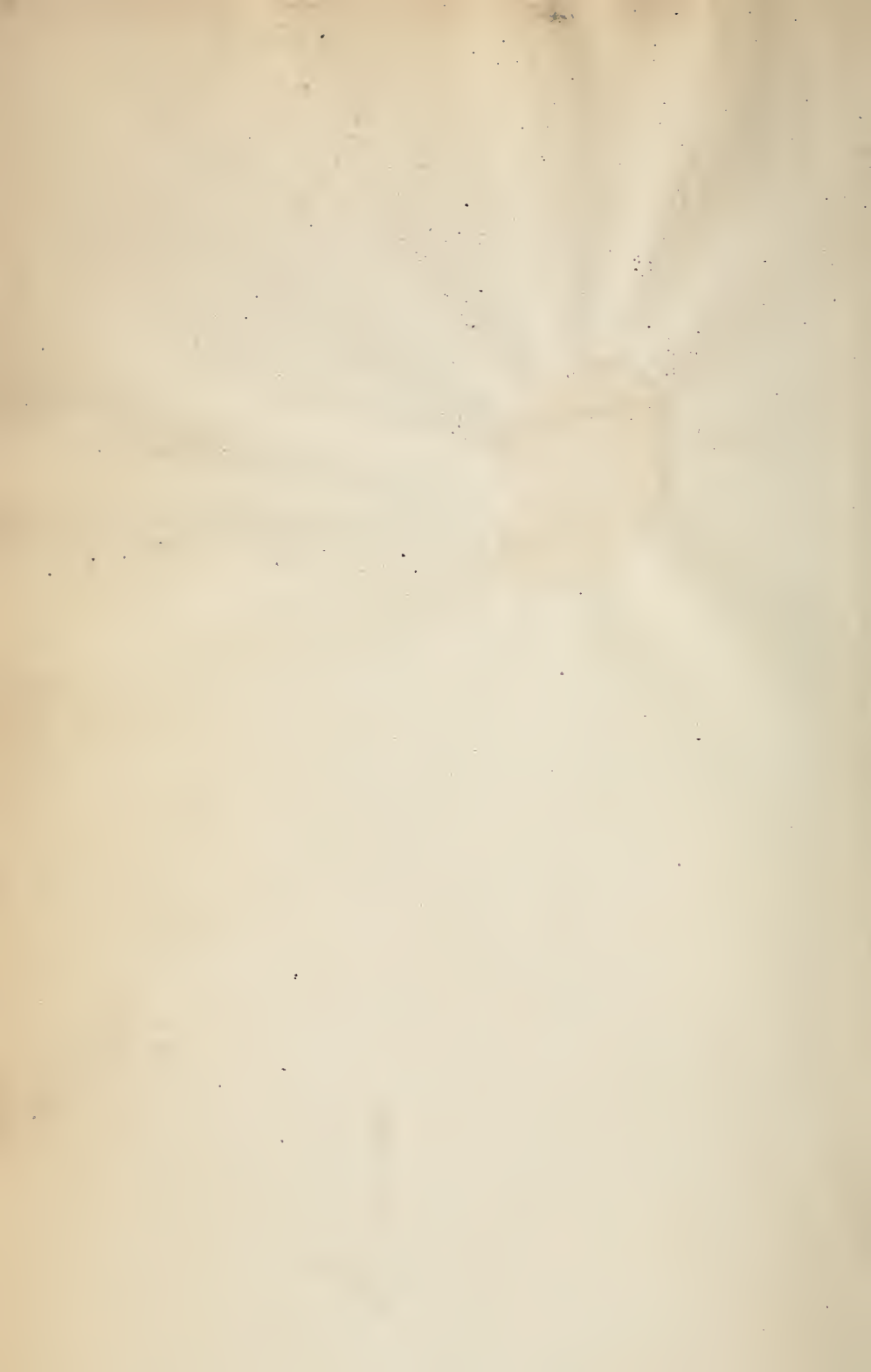
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MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

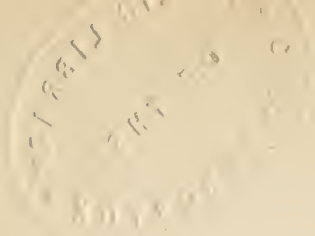
RECORDS OF
MINISTERIAL LIFE.

BY
JAMES GRIFFIN,
HASTINGS,
FORMERLY MINISTER OF RUSHOLME ROAD CHAPEL, MANCHESTER.

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P R E F A C E .

THE first few pages of this volume will show the circumstances that led to its publication, and at the same time indicate somewhat of its general nature, or at least its original design.

As it was not meant to be either an autobiography or a consecutive history of persons and events, no chronological order has been observed in its composition; and it has been so much shaped by incidental suggestion and association of thought as to have almost wholly precluded selection of materials and pre-arrangement of parts. It is as if the writer had been carried forward by some extraneous impulse on the lines of continually extending recollection, with many an unexpected opening to side views along the Line. One endeared name has recalled another; one well-remembered incident has revived another; one turn of thought has opened into another; thus

enlarging at every moment the range of reminiscence and reflection, until the book has attained a bulk far beyond the author's original purpose, though certainly not a large book, after all.

It was his earnest desire to avoid as much as possible writing in the *first person*; but he found with regard to many of the narratives that the attempt led only to confusion constantly becoming "worse confounded." So it became necessary to almost entirely abandon it, and to trust in this respect, as well as in all others, to the reader's considerate and kindly candour.

RUSHOLME LODGE,
HASTINGS.

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MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

CHAPTER I.

Occasion of publication—Letters of Dr. Spence and Dr. Waddington—Character of Dr. Spence—Dr. Waddington's *Congregational History*—Character of Dr. Waddington—His visit to Glasgow—Lancashire and Yorkshire ministers and Churches—Dr. Raffles, Kelly, Fletcher, etc.—Mr. Roby, Sutcliffe, and others.

It was at the suggestion—and, indeed, more than suggestion—of others whose opinions I felt ought not to be disregarded, that a record was commenced of some incidents connected with my early ministry at Manchester, and of whatever else might appear to be on some accounts noteworthy or likely to be useful. Yet I have long hesitated to commit the narratives to print; partly because it is impossible to avoid mixing up one's self with them, and partly from the consideration that though they may have seemed to be somewhat interesting as narrated by the living voice, in the unrestrained flow of familiar conversation, they might not prove to be so when

dryly transferred to the silent page. Scene-painting lies not within the range of the writer's ability; yet as to that, he must say that in all his oral allusions to the facts, everything like *colouring* has been strictly avoided.

The following letters of Dr. Spence and Dr. Waddington are instances of the suggestions referred to.

“13, GROVE ROAD, WANSTEAD, *December 9, 1873.*”

“MY DEAR MR. GRIFFIN,

“I have three words to say
thirdly, to urge you, with all the persuasiveness in my power, to write down some of your most interesting and touching pastoral reminiscences, such as those you narrated to us when we had the great pleasure of being last at Rusholme Lodge; and let me have them for the *Evangelical*. I am confident you would be doing good to the cause you love, and honouring “the Master,” by giving a little time to this; and I believe it would be pleasant work for yourself. Pray think of it. . . . I am thankful to say I feel considerably refreshed by our month's sojourn at Hastings. I trust, by the blessing of our Heavenly Father, I may get through the winter with comfort. With our united kindest regards to Mrs. Griffin, yourself, and Mrs. Rylands when you see her,

“I am yours, ever affectionately,

“JAMES SPENCE.”

“LONDON, 9, SURREY SQUARE, *July 3, 1878.*”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I feel constrained to continue my inquiries through the last quarter of a century, especially respecting the questions that affect the vital interests of our Churches. Great care is required; but also Christian decision—fearlessness without rashness. You are one of the few placed in the best position for observation, and acquainted with the leading movements of the period. I should value your help. I want letters from Mr. Kelly, of Liverpool, the correspondence of Mr. Gwyther, or any of the ministers of the time. You showed me a letter of your own to the *English Independent*, which was not printed, in reference to the concern expressed by Mr. Joshua Wilson on the maintenance of evangelical principles. I should like to take a copy of it, or of any similar document:—the story of Betsy Turner, and your poor people at Rusholme Road. I mention these things to give you an idea of the sort of communications I should like. I do not wish to subject you to any strain of effort that might be inconvenient or irksome, but just as you have opportunity, or feel the inclination to furnish me with any particulars. The daylight is not yet past. Let us make good use of it.

“With best wishes, and kindest regards to Mrs. Griffin,

“I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

“JOHN WADDINGTON.”

Very dear to me are the memories of my honoured brethren, the writers of these letters, and of the refreshing intercourse I have, from time to time, enjoyed with them. Having passed part of their early ministerial life in Lancashire, the one at Preston, the other at Stockport, they were pretty well acquainted with the Church at Rusholme Road, Manchester, as well as with its minister, and would naturally, years after, draw him into "table-talk" about things of former days; and thus some of the incidents they allude to in their correspondence might have come out in the interchange of free and fraternal converse. And now that his beloved brethren have passed away, their earnest appeals have seemed to come home to him with the solemnity and impressiveness of a voice from heaven—a voice no longer to be disregarded. *Their* "daylight" of earthly service has *set*; that of their surviving friend is hastening fast towards "the night in which no man can work." And, under these impressions, he has concluded it to be his *duty* to commit, without further delay, these memorials to the press; not without many a fervent prayer that the Lord may grant, as He shall see good, that some effectual blessing may follow their publication.

The friendship of Dr. Spence was one of our most precious social privileges. His protracted

visits to Hastings with his beloved and valued wife, especially when his wasting heart-disease had entirely put an end to his public labours, were singularly delightful to us. The noble chapel at Clapton, now so worthily occupied by our excellent brother Mr. Hebditch, had been built for him, but he was never permitted to do more than to administer the Lord's Supper in it. Of course, he deeply felt this trial of his faith and patience, but most beautiful was his humble filial acquiescence in his Father's will. Nothing could be discerned but the completest resignation to that will through all the long and weary months that were appointed to him as his strength was slowly declining, until he gave up his spirit into the hands of his Redeemer, and entered into His presence. Dr. Spence was indeed "a brother beloved." Manly and noble in mind and character, as in personal form, his very countenance wore the aspect of a sanctified manhood; for that strikingly intellectual and most benign countenance seemed but the natural outbeaming of the spirit, so illumined and refined, that dwelt within.

I had opportunity of knowing the high estimation in which he was held by the Churches of which he was successively the pastor, at Oxford, at Preston, and at the Poultry, London, and how at each of them he was regarded with universal reverence and love. When the Church

at the Poultry was thinking of inviting him, the senior deacon asked me if I knew Mr. Spence, and whether I should suppose him suitable for the Poultry. I said I knew him very well, but I could by no means recommend him to them. The deacon looked surprised, but I immediately added, "He is far too good to be spared from Lancashire." Lancashire, however, could not keep him, and no doubt it was right. Few ministers have had a more difficult question to solve as to the course he should take; for, besides that he was most happy in connection with his important charge at Preston, three distinguished positions were at one and the same time offered to his acceptance—Glasgow, Dr. Wardlaw's; Grosvenor Street, Manchester, which had been Mr. Roby's and afterwards Mr. Fletcher's; and the Poultry, London.

One can scarcely, perhaps, characterize Dr. Spence as possessing strikingly original genius or brilliant rhetorical talent. He was more solid than showy. But when in vigorous health, and under strong excitement, whether in the pulpit or on the platform, the beauty, the elevation, and the force both of his thoughts and his utterance were exceedingly commanding. As a minister of the Gospel, his qualifications were of a very high order, both intellectually and spiritually. A diligent and careful literary student, and a patient, independent, and vigorous thinker, his

acquirements were accurate and large. As a biblical student he was especially eminent. His theology was scripturally clear, well connected, and sound. His views of revealed truth were of the Calvinistic type, but moderately and intelligently so. He would have been marked, no doubt, as belonging to what is called "the old school" rather than to the "new;" but to whatever school of thought he belonged, it was a school that taught its disciples to get for themselves, as far as possible, a distinct and well-assured ascertainment of the great landmarks of Divine truth, and conscientiously and firmly to maintain and teach them.

His scholarly and cultured tastes and aptitudes, and his general intelligence, made him a charming companion; but he never seemed to wish to *shine* in company or to talk for self-display. He was not without decided and just self-respect, but pretension, self-seeking vanity, and affectation of any kind, in the pulpit or out of it, he utterly abhorred. Quiet communion with a brother on whose sympathies he could rely appeared to be his delight; for his disposition was the most sweetly but unostentatiously affectionate it is possible to conceive. And I should suppose that no such brother could be favoured with his intimate intercourse without feeling himself better for his fellowship. So, at least, I always felt myself. He was certainly

one of the most devout and spiritually minded men I have ever been acquainted with. His piety was so real, so natural, so uniform, diffusing without apparent design such "a sweet savour of Christ," that I often thought if there was any man who could truly adopt the beautiful words of Paul—"This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that with simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world"—that man was Dr. Spence; and as often as I have thought so *I have longed to be like him.*

The letter of Dr. Waddington I regard as an interesting one when read in the light of his voluminous *Congregational History*, and as in some degree suggestive of the character of the man. Whether its composition as a history is the most effective that could be desired; whether some things had not been better left in the obscurity in which he found them; and whether consecutive order and arrangement, and just proportion, have been consulted to the best advantage, I leave others to judge. But of the designs and aims of the laborious writer there can be, I should think, but one opinion. They must be obvious to every reader; and to me, at least, they appear to merit the very highest commendation. By his diligent researches he has brought together—and in many instances *brought to light*—a vast amount of most

valuable as well as interesting historical information, both of a private and a public nature—the former by no means less valuable than the latter. Those portions which relate to the personal and ministerial character and labours of the men who have gone before us—some of them, it may be, comparatively obscure, but hard-working, self-denying, and God-honoured men—will be read, I hope, with the serious regard they so well deserve, and with the profit which they are fitted so abundantly to yield. Wherever the writer can bring out to view the piety and devotedness of the more publicly distinguished men, he evidently does so with the sympathetic interest of a godly mind. An instance may be seen in the beautiful and touching correspondence of Mr. Binney with the Wymondley Committee, when he was desiring to enter the ministry, which, but for Waddington's researches, would have been buried in oblivion. Those letters bring out very clearly young Binney's sincere and thorough piety, his simplicity and modesty of disposition, and his conscientious anxiety with regard to his preparation for the ministry; and reveal the principles and spirit which, whatever may have been the peculiarities of his temperament, constituted the elements of his truly noble character and life.

Dr. Waddington knew how to appreciate the men who were good and true, and was ready to

award them without stint their meed of honour. Like the last of the apostles, he loved the brethren "for the truth's sake." "The truth" itself, according to his view of it, as revealed in the Scriptures, he would always maintain with uncompromising firmness; of whatever he believed to be contrary to it he was the unflinching opponent: for he desired above all things to be found, in all circumstances and at all costs, a faithful witness for Christ. In all matters, indeed, he was an inflexible assertor of whatever he held to be true and right. His "decision" and "fearlessness"—to quote his own words—no one was permitted long to question, but whether always displayed without "rashness," some persons might, perhaps, have considered in certain passages of his history more open to doubt; for certainly there was no small degree of the pertinacious, if not of the combative, in his composition. Yet no one who knew him well could fail to perceive that conscientious honesty was the master principle of his nature. As "a good soldier of Jesus Christ," he reckoned upon "hardness," of more kinds than one, and was prepared to endure it. In early years he seems to have thought himself destined to duties of more than ordinary trial and pressure, and that, in fact, like the prophet of Anathoth, "his mother had borne him a man of contention." While he was in the midst of some conflict at Stockport, he called on me one

day at Manchester, and almost before he could be seated, he said, "Since I last saw you I have been in Glasgow." "Why, how so?" "Well, towards the end of last week I felt wearied and jaded, and thought I would have a change; so, having procured a supply for the Sunday, I set off for Liverpool, to take one of the steamers for some place or other, I did not care where. Finding one starting for Glasgow, I stepped aboard, and reached that city on Sunday morning. I went to Dr. Wardlaw's. He was beginning that day a course of lectures on the *Life and Ministry of Jeremiah*, expounding the first chapter. I soon saw why I was brought to Glasgow, and what was the work I had to do—'to root out, and to pull down, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant.' Satisfied on that point, I took steamer the next day for Liverpool, where I arrived yesterday; so here I am." And as he turned my attention to the passage, and pointed to the words, "Thou therefore gird up thy loins like a man, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them," his soul seemed expanding with ardour and strength. Often since that time have I thought of this incident as strikingly characteristic of the man, and most notably prophetic of the somewhat peculiar subsequent career of the Stockport Jeremiah.

His researches and studies had led him to a high appreciation of Congregationalism, historically viewed, as being, in his judgment, closely allied to whatever tends to the promotion of intellectual, religious, and civil freedom, and as thus embodying the principles and the spirit of genuine puritanism—of that essential puritanism which was as sinews of iron, and as armour of more than triple brass to the heroic men who conquered for us our religious liberties, and has really done more than all besides to make Great Britain and America the foremost nations of the world. But it was because he believed it to be founded on New Testament principles and precedents, and rooted in evangelical and spiritual truth, that he chiefly valued the Congregational polity and organization; and he knew that, losing their hold of the truths of the gospel, the Congregational Churches must decay and die. It was especially to exhibit the fruitful influence of those scriptural principles that he set himself to write his *Congregational History*. In his preface to the fourth volume he says, with equal truth and force, “The result of our investigation shows, without a shadow of doubt, that our fathers kept the faith. They never hesitated to make the declaration of their views in private or in public; and the fruit of that living faith is seen in the Churches planted in every region of the globe. . . . The examples of piety, genius, and

eloquence given in the course of this history are amongst the most beautiful and noble that ever adorned the Church of God ; and their ' memorial ' will not perish."

Dr. Waddington was distinguished by some very high qualities of Christian character : deep religious convictions and feelings ; stern and unbending principle ; manly, possibly rather proud, disinterestedness and independence ; indomitable courage, resolution, and energy, springing from, and sustained by, faith in God. He was, at the same time, a man of lively spiritual affections, most sympathetic tenderness of heart, fervently concerned for the interests of religion, and earnestly longing for the advancement of true evangelical piety among us. He would have been a marked man among the best of the Puritans.

With not a few of the " personal examples " of the last generation to whom, no doubt, Dr. Waddington alludes, both he and I were well acquainted, and much did he love to revert to their memories. In a second letter, June 24, 1879, he writes : " I have very pleasant recollection of my visit. In seeing you, the group of old friends we used to meet seem to reappear through the dim vista of the past. How glorious must be the ' general assembly,' where all are ' perfect ' ! " As both of us had begun our ministry in Lancashire, he was just the man to talk

with of the men of former days with whom we had been associated more or less intimately in that part of the country. It was pleasant to review, with gratitude to a gracious Providence, the happy privilege we had enjoyed in being associated with the eminent ministers of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and the neighbouring counties, and the no less eminent Churches over which they presided, with their leading members of high Christian character and intelligence, who, by their ample means, their large liberality, and their practical energy, were so efficiently promoting every enterprise that had for its object the welfare of mankind and the glory of God.

Among the men who passed in review before us were Dr. Raffles, with his overflowing geniality, his kindness to all his brethren, his indefatigable industry and energy in the service of Christ, his unswerving faithfulness to the vital and saving truths of the gospel, and his splendid oratorical ability, sustained and aided, as it was, by his portly form, his noble and most expressive features, and that magnificent voice of his; and John Kelly, with his robust understanding, and his resolute will, and his sterling worth; and Richard Fletcher, so frank and sincere, so unselfish and brotherly, and so beloved and respected by all who knew him; and Gwyther, gentlest of spirits and most laborious of workers; and Poore, whose directness and transparent simplicity of

character, and whose ardent zeal, heroic intrepidity, and never-failing buoyancy of temper, have been strikingly exhibited in his memoirs, so well written by that excellent and judicious minister, the Rev. J. Corbin; and our noble-minded Presbyterian brother, Dr. McKerrow, who had the honour of being elected the second Moderator of the United English Presbyterian Church; and Dr. Vaughan, that "king of men," whose massive intelligence and commanding influence were such a tower of strength in the denomination; and Halley, the accurate scholar, the vigorous, terse, and racy writer, the powerful speaker, and the generous friend; and Francis Tucker, the bland and courteous Baptist brother, with his sweetness of spirit and beautiful mind; and Dr. Massie, that man of endless enterprise, and indomitable resolution, and practical energy; and David Everard Ford, the fervid author of *Decapolis* and *Chorazin*, and other useful publications; and James Hill, so refined, so holy, and so placid—at first a missionary in Calcutta, and afterwards pastor, successively, at Oxford, Salford, and Clapham, and for whom was erected that fine church now so nobly occupied by Guinness Rogers; and Dr. Richard Winter Hamilton, so profound and acute as a thinker, so original as a writer; and Walter Scott (father of the respected President of the Lancashire Independent College), a man of granite, who forcibly reminds me of what Dr.

Waugh said of Dr. Bogue, at that great man's funeral—that "he had a mind as magnificent and as rugged as his native mountains;" and John Ely, vigorous and effective equally in thought and in action, and honoured and beloved of all Lancashire and Yorkshire; and that surpassingly thrilling and powerful preacher, James Parsons, who, in his boundless popularity, seemed to belong to the Churches of all England.

I have omitted the name of the apostolic Roby, for I think Dr. Waddington had not personally known him. But to *him* the Congregational Nonconformity of Lancashire owes really more than to any other man. Mr. Roby may be said to have been the father of a race of ministers in that part of the country, not so conspicuous, it may be, as some others, but who occupied a highly useful and honourable department in the service of the Church,—men distinguished rather as devoted pastors, "faithful and wise stewards," than as eloquent preachers and public speakers, yet "able ministers of the New Testament," "apt to teach," well-instructed, conscientious, diligent labourers in the work of the Lord; men who by their scriptural, judicious, and earnest ministry, by their assiduous and loving attention to the spiritual interests of their congregations and the people around them, and by their consistent, dignified, and holy character, diffused the knowledge and spirit of the gospel widely in their

localities, and have left abundant spiritual fruit-
age behind them—men of whom it will be said
for many generations, “their fruit remaineth.”
Pre-eminent among that class was Jonathan
Sutcliffe, of Ashton-under-Lyne, who was the
means of building, and filling with an influential
congregation, one of the largest chapels in the
county, in which he was succeeded by our
admirable friend, Guinness Rogers, now of Clap-
ham,—that stalwart champion of the spiritual
and civil independence of the Church of Christ.
In that congregation grew up such families as
those of the Buckleys, Sir James and Samuel
Watts, Mr. John Cheetham, long an M.P. for
East Lancashire, Mr. Hugh Mason, the present
M.P. for Ashton, and other highly creditable
persons. Their amiable and much-respected
minister was one of my very valued friends; and
he would assuredly not be overlooked by Dr.
Waddington and myself; neither would those
excellent men, Mr. Slate and Mr. Carnson, both
of Preston. Among this class, also, the names
of George Greatbatch and John Alexander will
long be remembered as the pioneers of the
gospel, and the fathers of Nonconformity in the
now flourishing watering-towns of Southport and
Church-town, and in the region round about,—
both of them eminently laborious, self-denying,
and much-beloved servants of Christ.

There are other valued brethren still living

whom I have known from the commencement of their ministry; and why should I not mention them? There is my warm-hearted and devoted friend James Bedell, one of the earliest of the Lancashire College students. While he was a student he began a work in Oldham Road, at that time a comparatively destitute part of Manchester, where a large chapel was built for him, and a large congregation and noble Sunday school were gathered by his zealous efforts and those of his friends. From among the boys of that Sunday school went forth that able, energetic, and intrepid missionary, James Macfarlane, who first introduced the gospel among the savage natives of Papua, or New Guinea, and who has so much interested the friends of the London Missionary Society by the recital of his work. Mr. Bedell, after a laborious and successful ministry of thirty years at Oldham Road, has, for the sake of his health, wisely taken a smaller sphere in the vicinity of Manchester, where he is as useful and as happy and as much esteemed as ever he was. Long may his valuable life be spared!

And there is John Hodgson, another of the first students of Lancashire College. He settled at Oldham, where he has been labouring with constant assiduity, beloved by his people, by his brethren, and by all who know him, to the present day. He is the son of my late respected friends

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Hodgson, of Stainland, Yorkshire—fine examples of that truly puritan character by which, to my personal knowledge, so many of the deacons and members of the Yorkshire Churches were distinguished.

And there is John Thornton, of Stockport, one of the most earnest men of the North. He began his ministry at Bognor, in Sussex, where he received his ordination “charge” from my father. He is the son of the late John Thornton, of Billerecay, the author of an excellent book entitled *Early Piety*—a book which was of great use to me when I was a youth of sixteen years of age. Mr. Thornton has retired from public work, but is as much interested in the progress of Christ’s cause as ever, as a fervid and impressive appeal he has recently addressed to the Churches on behalf of special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, makes manifest.

And then, too, there is an excellent brother, Mr. R. M. Davies, of Oldham, to whose intelligent and unwearied zeal, as Secretary of the Lancashire Congregational Union, that important association is so largely indebted. He was one of Dr. McAll’s young men at Mosley Street. Oldham has been his sphere from the first; and he is still, after forty years, as I have lately had opportunity of learning, as fresh and vigorous as ever. Long may he continue so!

He will remember from whom I had a story,

which I have repeated more than once, as being a good and a useful one. I, at least, remember it well. In substance it was something like the following:—"I was going on well at Oldham, the Church and congregation increasing, when a party of Scotchmen came to some works in the neighbourhood, and attended our chapel on the sabbath. I was told that they were very intelligent and, indeed, superior men. So I thought I must try to raise the tone and style of my preaching to suit them. Accordingly I began to adopt the lecture and essay style, both of thought and language. But, after a while, it did not seem to answer. My 'intelligent Scotchmen' were far too intelligent to value it: the ordinary hearers, especially of the poorer class, began to fall off; my pious friends hinted to me that my ministry was not so profitable as formerly; and my own heart was becoming cold and comfortless. I perceived, in fact, that I had made a mistake, and that if my work was not to prove a failure I must get back to my old ways. I did so, and began to address myself with earnestness to the consciences and hearts of the people, and to preach Christ and His salvation as before. It was not long before I saw the effect. My 'intelligent Scotchmen' became attentive, the pews filled up again, souls were converted, the pious were happy, and I was happy too; and from that time things have

prospered with us, and never since that time have I seen reason to vary from my original determination to know nothing in my ministry but 'Christ, and Him crucified,' which I understand as embracing, more or less, 'the whole counsel of God.'"

I fear there are other well-meaning and really earnest young men—and some men, besides, that are not young and ought to know better—who make the mistake that my friend Mr. Davies did, but who are not so wise as he was in resolving to rectify it.

No small pleasure does it afford me to record the following statement in the *Independent and Nonconformist* newspaper which has just fallen under my eye, respecting a worthy brother whom I knew well from the commencement of his ministry, and greatly esteemed. I do so with peculiar gratification, because Edward Morris belongs to that modest class of ministers who have little public notoriety beyond the immediate circle of their influence, and perhaps do not seek any, but who have, no doubt, a rich reward in their work, in the satisfaction of their conscience, and in the humble but happy expectation of their Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant." "The Rev. Edward Morris, after a pastorate of forty years, has resigned the charge of the Church at Sale. The Church, to mark the high regard in which he is held by

them, have resolved to appoint him 'honorary pastor,' it being understood that in such honorary position he will be free from all ministerial duties or official responsibilities in connection with the Church. The *Altrincham Guardian* says that during the conversation which ensued at the meeting when the resolution was adopted 'many references were made to the usefulness of Mr. Morris, not only in his own Church, but in the township generally, where for very many years he has been one of the foremost in every movement having for its object the public good. Special references were made to the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Sale branch of which was established about thirty-three years ago by Mr. Morris and others, and of which he was secretary upwards of eighteen years; to the Cheshire Congregational County Union, of which he was secretary for six years; to the Sale Institute, of which he has been a trustee and the secretary for twenty years; to the Altrincham Board of Guardians, of which he was a member, representing Sale for twenty years; to the Sale Township Schools, now educating upwards of five hundred children, of which he is a trustee, and has acted as secretary for twenty-eight years; and also to the Burial Board, which has now been established twenty years. Having been amongst those who so gallantly and successfully fought for the establishment of a cemetery, he was

elected the first chairman to the board, and has ever since continued to hold that honourable office.' ”

The men who go wandering about and shifting their places every few years can never obtain such a memorial as this.

CHAPTER II.

Dr. McAll—General estimation of him—Dr. Raffles' opinion of him—Robert Hall's—Hears him at Bristol—Stranger at Mosley Street—Dr. Trestrail's *Reminiscences*—Sermon at Mosley Street—His brotherly kindness—My ordination—His devotedness—Concern about his ministry—Ministerial revival—Letter to Dr. Raffles—Ministerial Conference.

WHATEVER names might recur to Dr. Waddington's memory or mine, when talking of the past, one there was among them all that seemed always on our lips, though with bated breath and moistened eye—that of the honoured and beloved McAll. We felt as if we never could be weary of talking of the extraordinary extent and variety of his knowledge; of his transcendent eloquence; of the fascination of his genius, and the still greater fascination, when he was in his best moods, of his personal deportment; of the unutterable charm of his conversation and companionship; and, above all, of his deeply devout and consecrated spirit, and the intensely anxious longing of his soul to realize, in full, the great ends of his ministry, and to find himself at last "accepted" of the Lord. And as we thought of

him and other brethren, of their diversified excellences and various work, the review could not but awaken in our hearts the liveliest gratitude to God for the grace which had been given them, and an earnest desire to follow them, so far as they had followed Christ.

So highly do I estimate the privilege I enjoyed for nine memorable years in intimate intercourse with my much-revered friend McAll, so rich were the benefits derivable from his exalted character, even more than from what Dr. Collyer called “his seraphic genius,” that it would indeed delight me to say more about him; for with all that has been written of him in bulky volumes, I suspect he is but little known—partly, perhaps, *because* of the bulkiness of the volumes, and partly because he was never particularly popular in London. Yet he *ought* to be known, and his posthumously published productions, especially his *Charges to Ministers*, to be deeply read; and not less Dr. Wardlaw’s profoundly interesting and touching biography of him.

I have never met with any intelligent person, cleric or laic, who was fairly acquainted with Dr. McAll, that did not appear to feel respecting him as all his brethren at Manchester did. The power he exerted on minds of every order was simply wonderful. This word “wonderful” was just that, indeed, which seemed naturally to spring to everybody’s lips when speaking of him.

On my first visit to Manchester, I was conversing with a lady of distinguished talents, Miss Jewsbury, the poet, and, speaking of McAll, I used some such flimsy word as "clever." She looked at me with evident astonishment at the feebleness of my expression—I had known but little of him then—and said, "Clever, sir! Why, I never hear him without feeling that all I can say is 'wonderful!'" She was a member of the Established Church, but heard McAll occasionally.

It was by the same word that Dr. Raffles was wont at times to express his view of him. It was beautiful to see how these two distinguished men—distinguished diversely, in some respects, by intellectual gifts, but very much alike in moral character—loved and honoured one another. When Dr. McAll delivered in Liverpool, at one of the special services on behalf of what may be called *religious revival*, that remarkable sermon, which is to be found among his published *Discourses*, from the text in Zech. viii. 21, "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also," my home for the night was at Dr. Raffles' house. At the close of the service, I waited for him at the door of Great George Street Chapel. At once, throwing himself back in his ample carriage, and covering his face with his hands, he burst into tears, and then fixing on me a look of

indescribable emotion, he exclaimed, "Oh, what a sermon we have had! What a wonderful being that man is!" I could not be surprised at his emotion. How all our souls were bowed and melted under the mighty influence of that discourse, no language can express. It seems impossible that hundreds should not have gone away to weep as Dr. Raffles did.

Not long before Dr. Raffles' death, my wife and I were staying with him at the house of Mr. Joshua Wilson at Tunbridge Wells. Much did the venerable man love to talk of former days, yet not without a touch of sadness. McAll, of course, was talked about. I reminded him of some expressions he had used respecting him at one of the meetings of the Lancashire Union, McAll being absent. They were exceedingly strong expressions, such as might seem extravagant to those who had not known him. "Did I say so?" the doctor replied. "Very likely I did, but I do not remember." "Yes, I have repeated your *ipsissima verba*, for they were engraven on my memory. You uttered those words under excited feeling, on a public occasion; would you now, in the calm review of the past, say anything like them?" "Yes, every word of it, without abating a jot." And then thoughtfully and slowly he added, "He was the most wonderful being I have ever known."

The same effect was produced on the mind of

Robert Hall. One of McAll's friends at Manchester, Mr. John Wood, of Clayton Vale, who had formerly been connected with Mr. Hall's congregation at Leicester, I think, told me that he had just been visiting his old pastor at Bristol. Mr. Wood said to him, "I find, sir, you know my present pastor, Mr. McAll." "No, sir, I don't," said Mr. Hall. "Why, has he not been lately at Bristol, and in your company? I understood so." "Oh yes, quite true, sir, quite true; but I thought you asked me if I knew him. I am surprised, sir, that you should ask such a question. No mortal can know him. He is the most wonderful being I have ever met with. To know him is impossible. He is miraculous, sir,—quite miraculous."

Dr. McAll told me about that visit of his to Bristol. "Mr. Hall and I," he said, "were riding together to the place where I was to preach. 'How astonishingly calm you are, sir,' said Mr. Hall, 'and yet you are going to preach! How is it, sir? I should like to know the secret; it seems to me very remarkable.' So I smiled, and taking out my manuscript, I said, 'There is the secret.' 'Oh, I see, sir; but *can* you read in the pulpit? I wish I could. What advantage there must be in it!' I answered, 'No one besides yourself wishes it, Mr. Hall.' When we reached the vestry he found a sofa in it—I had got it placed there without his knowledge. 'See here,

sir, they have got a sofa in the vestry, so you see I can recline on that, and with the door a little open I shall be able to hear you.' I had not been preaching long before I observed the people's eyes directed towards the door with a titter on their faces. I suspected the cause, and glancing round, I saw Mr. Hall's pipe protruding from the door, and clouds of smoke rapidly emitted from it. Then I saw his face, and then his whole body leaning against the door-post; and so there he stood to the end of the sermon. When I went into the vestry, I said, 'Mr. Hall, do you know what you have been doing?' 'No, sir; what have I been doing?' 'Why, you have been smoking your pipe in the chapel nearly all the time. I have been preaching.' 'Have I indeed, sir? I was not aware of it; but it was impossible to lie still, sir,—quite impossible.' "

Mr. Hall was not the only one who could not keep still under McAll's preaching. Walking home with him one Monday, from a meeting of some Irish Society at which some Irish clergymen had been speaking with great force, he said, "I was very much annoyed last evening by the behaviour of one of my hearers—a stranger. He was apparently a gentleman, and dressed in clerical costume. He sat in the centre, right before me; and soon after I had commenced my sermon, he began to act in a most extraordinary

manner. Now and then he seemed to stare at me with a singular expression of countenance, and then he fidgeted and wriggled about, and sometimes half rose from his seat, and looked at the people, right and left, and behind him, and nodded and bobbed his head, and appeared to be smiling at somebody. His conduct disturbed me so much—for it was just in front of me—that I fixed my eye on him steadily, resolved, if possible, to look him out of countenance. But it was in vain; on he went with the same antics rather more than otherwise, till I could bear it no longer. So I paused, and then, still keeping my eye upon him, said, ‘I am astonished that any one, especially in the garb of a gentleman, should conduct himself in the house of God with such irreverence and indecorum as I have been sorry to observe in the case of one of my hearers!’ In fact, I administered a tolerably severe rebuke to him. But it was all utterly useless; it seemed only to provoke him to look about more restlessly than ever; so, supposing the poor man must be out of his mind, and that I had better leave him alone, I fairly gave in. As I entered the meeting this morning, a clergyman was speaking with great energy—you remember which one it was—and I immediately recognized him as the person whom I had been publicly rebuking the evening before. At the close of the meeting I went to the platform to have the matter cleared up. He at once

came forward, saying, 'Oh, Mr. McAll, I am so glad to see you, for I want to thank you for the sermon I had the pleasure of hearing last night. But I was very sorry to find that there was somebody annoying you by his inattention to the discourse.' 'Well, you yourself were the person.' 'I, Mr. McAll?—you do not mean that, surely?' 'I do, indeed.' 'Why, my dear sir, how is that possible? I was so much interested and excited that I could hardly keep my seat.' 'Exactly; it was obvious that you either could not, or would not keep your seat, and it was that which disturbed me.' 'Oh, Mr. McAll, I am exceedingly sorry. I hope, if I should ever hear you again, I shall behave better.' 'I hope so too,' I said; and so, with a hearty laugh over it, we have parted good friends."

In Dr. Trestrail's *Reminiscences* of his college life at Bristol, there is an interesting reference to Dr. McAll's visit to that city, and to his preaching on some occasion at Broadmead Chapel. He describes the sermon as very "elaborate," and as having "a sort of misty air about it," and mentions John Foster saying of it, "Too deep, too deep." I can understand this description. This was, no doubt, the character, occasionally, of his discourses, to the regret of his best and most intelligent friends. He had just returned from Bristol when I first visited Manchester, in July, 1828. At that time there were three

services on the sabbath at Rusholme Road, but on my first Sunday evening Mr. Roby's assistant had been engaged to preach, so Mr. Hadfield, "mine host," urged me strongly to take the opportunity of hearing McAll. I hesitated, thinking it would be disrespectful to the preacher at Rusholme Road. "I will be answerable for that," said Mr. Hadfield; "leave that to me." Of course, I gladly went; and oh, what a sermon! McAll was then preaching a course of sermons on "the Lord's Prayer." This one was from the words "Hallowed be Thy name." I think the sermon must have been something like an hour and a half long, and *that* after an exceedingly long prayer. And what a prayer! its profound adoration, its filial reverence, its lowly confessions, its multiplicity of petitions and intercessions, its rapturous ascriptions of thanksgiving and praise—and throughout all with such wondrous variety and eloquence of diction! "It seemed," indeed,—to use the language of one of his most cultured hearers, in describing his prayers in general,—“as if a seraph might be bending among the celestial worshippers, and bowing in meek but rapturous adoration before the throne.” Some quarter of an hour of the sermon was occupied in answering the question, whether the language of our Lord was that of adoration or of petition. After discussing it with abundant argument, with extreme rapidity of

utterance—for he never read a word,—and seeming sometimes to be in danger of involving himself and his hearers in inextricable perplexity by his frequent parentheses and renewed explanations,—from which, however, he always emerged with surprising facility,—he reached the conclusion that the words “Hallowed be Thy name” must be taken as words of adoration, and not of supplication, his principal argument being that, supposing them petitionary, there would be three petitions of similar import, and such tautology was not to be attributed to our Lord. Having arrived at this conclusion, he proceeded to some reflections respecting the adoring reverence with which the Divine Being should be regarded—with reference to His nature, character, operations, and relations to ourselves;—and perhaps this part was the most *impressive* of the whole. But the magnificence and the glory of the remainder of the sermon surpassed all that I had ever conceived of pulpit discourse, as he led us on in contemplation, successively, of each Divine natural attribute and moral perfection, and expatiated over the kingdoms of creation, providence, and grace, and at length drew towards the close in a peroration and application of exquisite solemnity, sweetness, and pathos. The impression produced on my mind that night seems now, as I am writing these lines at the distance of nearly fifty-five years, to be almost as vivid as if I had but just

heard the sermon delivered. The whole scene—the square, and rather dingy, yet respectable old chapel, with its solid pulpit, the row of Ionic pillars behind it, the intelligent faces all around me,—and, more than all, the preacher himself—his graceful but manly form robed in the pulpit vestments, his calm, commanding attitude and very slight and dignified gesticulation, his most speaking and piercing eyes, his full-toned, vigorous, and amazingly facile utterance, his perfect elocution—all is before me still, and never can be forgotten among the memories of life. On returning to Mr. Hadfield's, I said, "I pity the man who shall occupy your pulpit at Rusholme Road"—little dreaming that I myself was to be that man; for it had been stipulated and understood that in supplying for a month I was not to be considered as a candidate for the pulpit, as I had twelve months more to complete my term at Highbury, after which I hoped to go to Glasgow. "Why should you pity the man?" asked Mr. Hadfield. "Because if this is the sort of preaching to which Manchester is accustomed, I do not see how any ordinary man is to make his way." But, through Divine goodness, I lived to know that this was an erroneous opinion, and something worse; and that, God helping him, there was something to be done, and a blessing to be realized, in Manchester by "an ordinary man," and that I was to enjoy the privilege

of calling the great preacher to whom I had listened with almost idolatrous admiration my revered and much-loved friend, and to be treated by him for nine happy years with most brotherly kindness.

He never affected the "great man" among his brethren, or assumed airs of superiority or even of leadership among us. He was simple, natural, accessible, affectionate, courteous towards us all. He interested himself about our work, and at all times manifested the most fraternal sympathy with us in all that respected our welfare personally and ministerially, delicately studying to secure our confidence and attachment; and it was evident that nothing gave him greater satisfaction than to find that he was trusted and loved. A week or two after my settlement, a family connected with his congregation, named Latham, who lived opposite to my lodgings, invited him to spend an evening with them. "Well," said he, "I shall find it difficult to get an evening just now, but I will come on one condition, that you will ask Griffin also;" and we had a delightful evening, McAll being in one of his happiest moods. It is true, my father's name, and the influence of some of the leading members of my own congregation, speedily gave me an introduction to the principal families connected with the older Churches in the town; but we owed it likewise in no small measure to the

kindness of Mr. Roby and Mr. McAll, and other ministers, that on our marriage, some twelve months after, my wife, whom I had brought from my father's Church at Portsea, met at once with an affectionate welcome, not only from all the kind people of Rusholme Road Chapel, but also from a large circle of hospitable Christian friends connected with all the older Churches in Manchester and Salford. At my ordination Mr. McAll seemed to take as much interest in it as if it had been his own ordination, especially with regard to the personal feelings of his young brother. When the "Ordination Prayer" was to be offered by Mr. Roby, McAll got a large, stout-handled umbrella for me to rest my head upon, while he held it steadily as I knelt on the cushion, during Mr. Roby's richly comprehensive and most paternally affectionate prayer. I have that prayer now, written verbally, during its utterance, by one of Mr. McAll's people, Mr. Day. The services of that day were long remembered in Manchester and the neighbouring towns. The morning service—as I find from a record I made the next day—occupied nearly five hours; but, as I was told in various quarters, not a single person was known to go away till the whole was ended. The chapel was thronged to its utmost capacity. Mr. Birt, minister of the Baptist Chapel, York Street, conducted the preparatory devotional services; Dr. Raffles gave the "Intro-

ductory Discourse ;” Mr. Coombs, of Salford, asked the “Questions,” and received the written answers, including the Confession of Faith ; Mr. Roby, as has been said, offered the “ Ordination Prayer ;” and then my father addressed the “ Charge ” to his son from the words, “ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Many ministers stood round the young pastor during Mr. Roby’s prayer ; more than forty were present at the service. In the evening a crowd assembled again, when Dr. McAll delivered the “ Charge to the Church and Congregation,” included among his published *Discourses*, from the words, “ Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.”

As the newly ordained pastor was to administer the Lord’s Supper for the first time in the following month, Mr. McAll requested that we would have it on the second sabbath, that he and his people, as well as other ministers and members of Churches, might be present. It was held in the afternoon. Mr. Roby was too ill to come, but Mr. McAll, his brother Samuel, since the honoured President of Hackney College, then supplying at Mr. Roby’s, Mr. W. H. Stowell, President of Rotherham College, and Mr. Wheeler, an American minister, stood at the young pastor’s right and left hand at the Sacramental Table. Addresses were delivered, or prayers offered, by all these ministers. The presiding pastor happened to be wearing a white scarf, having in-

tered two young men in the course of the preceding week—one, a younger brother of Mrs. Hadfield, Mr. Rupert Pope, a lovely young man of twenty-one; the other, a student for the ministry, Thomas Davie, a most promising youth, of the same age. This circumstance gave a text to Mr. McAll, as he glanced at the funeral habiliments—in those times always worn on the sabbath after the funeral,—leading him into an exquisitely beautiful and touching line of address on the “white robes of the saints washed in the blood of the Lamb.” It was one of those spontaneous outpourings of his heart which were always felt by devout hearers to be more eloquently impressive than even the most finished of his prepared discourses.

I am not writing a biography of my venerated friend, nor even a sketch of his character; yet I desire to add a few more words respecting him. He has been usually alluded to as “the eloquent McAll,” and has been classed among the “rhetorical preachers,” as if he were little else, or as if this were the principal aspect in which he is to be viewed. This kind of representation gives not only an inadequate, but by far the least important view of him. His sanctity of character, and his ardent devotedness as a minister of Christ, impressed his brethren who knew him best even more than the marvellous displays of his intellectual powers; and it is to

this point I wish more particularly to refer in closing my notice of him. I will simply do so by a citation of a sentence or two from a discourse delivered to the congregation at Rus-holme Road Chapel a fortnight after his decease, and which appeared in the *Congregational Magazine*, almost without the author's cognizance. I quote from a paragraph of it with the more confidence, because as a fact mentioned in it, in illustration of Dr. McAll's earnest concern about his ministry, has been cited by Dr. Wardlaw in his memoir of McAll, and by Mr. J. A. James, in a paper read by him at a large conference of ministers at Chester, and afterwards published, and also by the editors of Dr. Guthrie's biography, it would seem that those eminent persons must have thought it usefully noteworthy. "His whole soul was consecrated to the ministry, and with ever-increasing intensity of interest as years passed on. When in company with his brethren conversation almost always turned upon this subject. As he advanced in life his view of its awful importance, its immense difficulties, and its tremendous responsibilities, became so serious as almost to appal his spirit. The account he would finally have to render of his stewardship appeared to me to be never absent from his thoughts; and often has he said, 'The almost only consideration that bears me on in my ministry is, that "necessity is laid upon

me, and woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!"' People sometimes injudiciously expressed in his presence, openly before others, their admiration, and that of other persons, of his discourses, in a way that vexed and grieved him. Again and again has he said to me, with an emotion of almost distress, 'I care nothing what people may think or say of my abilities if I may but be useful to souls;' and once, with a kind of swelling indignation, 'God knows I do not want their applause; I want their salvation.' An elder minister of this town recently reported expressions of Dr. McAll to him of precisely similar import. And, indeed, no brother minister who was favoured with his intimate intercourse could fail to perceive that he was panting with unutterable desire for the salvation of souls. His inquiries respecting modes of practical usefulness, styles of preaching most calculated for general profit, and whatever might tend to constitute an efficient ministry, were incessant. I have gathered from him, in the privacy of conversation, that whole hours of many nights have been spent in prayers and tears on behalf of the people of his charge, and on his own account as their pastor. And now that he is no longer with us, and desiring, as I do, that we may all derive advantage from the remembrance of his holy example, I have no hesitation in disclosing these facts; and I am sure that all my beloved

brethren would join me in these statements. We can never forget how often at our social meetings he would ask for that fine hymn of Doddridge to be sung—the ordination hymn—and with what emphasis he would read it, beginning—

‘Let Zion’s watchmen all awake,
And take the alarm they give;’

and that other by the same writer—

‘Arise, my tenderest thoughts, arise,
To torrents melt my streaming eyes;
And thou, my heart, with anguish feel
Those evils which thou canst not heal.’

His soul was now in unison with the tone of these fine compositions. He was now breathing the spirit of their lovely author, and of Payson, and of Martyn, and of Baxter, and of Paul; for he himself, with all of them, had richly partaken of ‘the mind of Christ.’ ”

My notices of Dr. McAll may appropriately, and I hope very usefully, be brought to a close by more special reference to meetings held in Manchester and Liverpool with a view to the revival of religion among us—though not so designated—and which, as has been already said, were prompted chiefly by him. It may tend strikingly to illustrate and confirm some of my statements respecting him, as well as to show the holy influences under which we were

all, more or less, brought about that time. This reference I will make, not in my own words, but by citation, from Dr. Waddington's *History*. At the commencement of one of his chapters he writes,¹ "For some time prior to this Dr. McAll withdrew from public engagements not immediately connected with his ministerial work. He was accessible to all, and interested in the movements around him, but, as by a special call from heaven, 'the whole force of his mind was collected and poured out on the attainment of more eminent spirituality and greater usefulness.' It was a delicate and difficult matter to incite others to seek higher spiritual attainments without the apparent assumption of superior sanctity. The steps he took, therefore, for the promotion of his object, in the first instance, were of an almost confidential character. He gained one and another to his views in private conversation, and then more openly, in the Manchester fraternal association, opened his heart with great simplicity and fervent affection on the subject, and found them all prepared to concur in his views, and ready to convene a meeting for the purpose of free conversation and united prayer. Prior to their invitation by circular, he wrote to Dr. Raffles to prepare his mind for the thoughtful consideration of the matter, and to ask his aid at the proposed meeting—

¹ *Congregational History*, vol. iv. chap. xiv. p. 397.

“MANCHESTER, *January 1, 1833.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“You will receive in a day or two a circular bearing the signatures of all our brethren, inviting you to a meeting for the purpose of ministerial conference and prayer, on Wednesday, the 8th of January next, and also to a preparatory meeting on the evening before, and a public breakfast on the morning of the 9th. The nature of our object will be perfectly understood when you look into that document, and I need not, therefore, distinctly describe it. . . . For a long time past we have been desirous that such a meeting should be held here or in Liverpool, and had hoped that it might be followed by others similar to it, perhaps once or twice in a year, not, like our present periodical convocation, for the mere despatch of business, itself in a great part secular, however sacred in its issues. These we are concerned to have conducted so as to bring under our consideration, in the manner of the earlier Nonconformists, those great practical principles which peculiarly bear upon the exercise of our ministry, and on which the piety and prosperity, both of pastors and their flocks, are so essentially dependent. From the first moment at which the design began to be cherished, our thoughts and wishes have been naturally and instinctively directed to you—for to whom besides could they be directed?

—to offer to ourselves and to our brethren such counsels and exhortations and encouragements as the season and the purpose might demand. *Do not* refuse our entreaty.”

Dr. Waddington proceeds: “Dr. Raffles complied with the request of his friend, and the meeting proved to be one of extraordinary interest. A letter before us”—probably a letter of Dr. Waddington himself—“dated January 13, 1834, contains the testimony of one who was present on the occasion.” Another who was present can testify from vivid recollection to the accuracy of the following account. It is at least anything but exaggerated.

“Fifty-five of our ministerial brethren willingly answered their affectionate summons, and were present at a meeting for prayer on Tuesday evening; and on the morning of Wednesday at ten assembled to converse with each other on the state of the Churches, and on the varied temptations, difficulties, and trials incident to the work of the Christian ministry. I can give you no description of the unction and solemnity that pervaded the hearts of all present. There were many present of eminence in the Church, and of extraordinary gifts (Dr. McAll, Dr. Raffles, and others), but every one felt as in the presence of Him who searcheth the heart; and nothing could exceed the humiliation of the greatest among us. It would have powerfully affected

you to have witnessed so many prostrate at the throne of mercy, confessing their sin, and imploring with strong cries and tears that God would have mercy upon them, and upon the people of their charge. In the history of those most advanced in years and experience, such a season was never remembered; and while the sympathies and supplications of all were blended, and they alternately wept together in the bitterness of the soul over the iniquities of our holy things, and mourned over the desolation of Zion, or their countenances were suffused with the light of holy exultation in the presence and blessing of the Spirit, each felt that there was magnitude in our responsibility, and solemnity in our obligations, we had never felt before; and under the force of emotions none could control, no relief could be obtained but in repeated, importunate, and protracted prayer to God. We vowed in the presence of the Most High that we would regard nothing so much as the glory of the Redeemer, and that we would seek nothing so ardently as the special illumination and grace of Heaven; and as we commended one another to the care and guidance of Jehovah, and bade each other a solemn farewell, we promised to entreat of God that we might impart to the Churches the blessings we had received.

“Similar meetings were held in Liverpool on the 21st of February, 1837, and the two following days.”

These quotations must not be extended; but who can wonder that brethren who in the early days of their ministry were brought powerfully under the influence of such a mind as that of McAll, should feel that he ought to be had "in everlasting remembrance"?

CHAPTER III.

James Parsons—His style of preaching—Sermon at the Tabernacle—Incident occurring there—Deacons—John Birt—Wesleyan ministers: Richard Watson—Dr. Osborn, Dr. Newton — Dr. Dixon — William Arthur — Dr. Bunting — Episcopalians: Canon Stowell—Mr. McGrath—Mr. Nunn.

IT may well moderate desire for posthumous remembrance to think how many of those distinguished persons, whose names during life were on everybody's tongue, ceased to interest public thought almost as soon as they ceased to live,—how the grave would seem to have closed over their memory as their mortal remains were consigned to the dust. "I buried my ambition in the grave of McAll," said Alfred Morris to me, not long after the death of that great man. It were well, indeed, if all our earthly ambition were buried, as that of every Christian ought to be, in the *grave of his Redeemer*. But so it is—"one generation goeth, and another cometh;" "and a generation arises that knows not Joseph." Something like this may be said with reference

to an honoured friend, who for half a century was, perhaps, on the whole, the most popular preacher in England—James Parsons. He is already spoken of simply, if talked of at all, as “one of the old ministers of the past generation.” And yet when I was a young man, and long after, the announcement of his name in London, or Bristol, or Birmingham, or any of the large northern towns, would have gathered thousands on thousands to hear him. Had his voice been equal to it, a place as large at least as the Metropolitan Tabernacle would have been too small for the crowds who would have sought to hear him in London. I am not sure that the inaudibility of his voice at the commencement did not aid the effect of his utterance as the sermon proceeded. At first it required a very good ear and the closest attention for those nearest the pulpit to catch a word. There seemed to be nothing but a strange little twittering sound, that almost made one laugh. His efforts to clear his voice and to make himself audible were painful to sensitive people. But gradually it increased in strength and distinctness, and became clear, shrill, and piercing to a most exciting degree. The scheme or outline of the discourse was stated with great simplicity and definite precision, according to the old system of “heads” and “particulars;” the entire sermon—for it was not an “essay”—being delivered *memoriter* from

beginning to end, each several division being usually supported by abundant quotation of Scripture, and each one advancing in accumulative rhetoric and intensity of utterance to the completeness of a climax, when both preacher and people, exhausted for a time, seemed to demand relief and reinvigoration in momentary pause and silence. Silence, however, there was not, but rather a universal stir and buzz, in preparation for what was next to follow. It was towards the end of the sermon that the preacher seemed to be gathering up all the forces of his spirit to one final effort for the sinner's salvation. It was then that those most thrilling and incisive appeals were addressed to the consciences of the hearers, which were repeated, and repeated, and yet again renewed with still-increasing urgency, as though the preacher's soul were breaking forth in very agony—

“To snatch the firebrands from the flame;”

until at length, as if the preacher and the hearers could bear no more, his tones sunk down to accents of pathos and solemnity that were verily appalling, as though now he were slowly relinquishing his grasp on the consciences of the finally impenitent, and mournfully resigning them to their awful destiny,—as if the day of judgment were just at hand, and men were about to hear from “the great white throne” their irrevocable doom.

It was just after my entering Hoxton, at the end of 1825,—for Highbury was not opened till six months after—that I first heard Mr. Parsons in the old Moorfields Tabernacle. I had heard of him before as “the great northern luminary,” and I was all eagerness to see and hear the popular young preacher. It was on a Sunday evening. I took care to go early, for it was necessary to do so to secure a good situation. The doors were opened an hour before the service to prevent a rush, and soon after they were opened the place was crowded in every part. I was in the side gallery, and I well remember with what interest I looked at the big square pulpit where Whitefield had been wont to stand, and round upon the walls that used to ring with his mighty voice. My heart was in my mouth when I first saw Mr. Parsons ascend the pulpit. Of his prayer I think I did not hear a word, and very little of the opening sentences of the sermon. He took for his text, “It is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.” The sermon was very much of the description just given of his preaching in general, and the effect on my own mind was almost overpowering. I was restless all the week long for the next Sunday to come; and I took every opportunity I could to hear him at the Tabernacle and at Tottenham Court Road during his month’s stay in London, and from year to year in his subsequent visits. The

effect of his earnest spirit was exceedingly beneficial on the minds of many of the students, in kindling or reviving the fire of their zeal.

At that first service at the Tabernacle an incident occurred deeply interesting to myself personally. There sat next to me in the gallery a tall, pale-faced gentleman of some forty years of age, of a remarkably amiable countenance; and as many of the people talked together in subdued voices before the service commenced, I got into conversation with him. Speaking about Mr. Parsons and young ministers, he said, "I have a young man with me in business at Chatham, who is soon going to Highbury College." "Indeed," I replied, "then he will be a companion of mine." "Oh, you are a student for the ministry, are you, sir? Pray, did you ever read the memoirs of a young minister of the name of Griffin, who was at Hoxton, and was afterwards settled at Exeter, but died very young?" I answered with as much composure as I could, "Yes, I have read the book. Did you know him?" "Yes; he came to Chatham, when a student, to preach for Mr. Slatterie—I am a deacon of his Church—and he was my guest on that occasion; he was one of the loveliest young men I ever met with in my life, and a charming preacher; I wish you could have known him." "I did know him," I replied, with a faltering voice; "he was the loveliest of

brothers.” He looked at me earnestly, and said, “You don’t mean to say he was your brother?” “Yes, my name is Griffin.” He at once burst into tears, and touching a lady who sat in the seat before us, said, “Who, my dear, do you think this is? He is a brother of John Griffin!” The lady was equally affected. “Oh, sir,” she said, “you can’t think how we loved him!” “I cannot be surprised that you loved him, for everybody who knew him did so too.” Some two years after, I was sent down to Chatham to preach for good Mr. Slatterie; and as I passed from the vestry to the pulpit I overheard a person say, “Oh, see! that is John Griffin’s brother, whom we saw at the Tabernacle.” Of course, from that time, these excellent persons, Mr. and Mrs. Shrewsbury, became my dear friends, and continued such till their death. They were the great uncle and aunt of my beloved young friend from Hastings, the Rev. Arthur Shrewsbury, recently so happily ordained pastor of a Church at Hammersmith, London. The young man of whom Mr. Shrewsbury spoke as about to join us at Highbury was Thomas Cousins, afterwards my father’s co-pastor and much-esteemed successor, and still living, retired from his work in the eightieth year of his age.

Mr. Parsons was, like McAll, no mere rhetorician. Very different, indeed, in their style of preaching, both were eminently *faithful* as well

as "*able* ministers of the New Testament." They "watched for souls as they that must give account," and God signally honoured them both. Mr. Parsons, constantly labouring for the *conversion* of sinners, had abundant fruit of his labours in that respect. He told me, in quietude, for he seldom spoke of himself or his ministry, that at Lendal Chapel, York, he could see in every pew, on an average, at least two persons who had been brought to Christ—during his ministry there. His spirit and his manners were those of the sweetest simplicity it is possible to imagine, and I soon learned to feel towards him the confidence of a brother.

Mr. Shrewsbury, to whom allusion has been made, was a fine specimen of a class of deacons who are to be found, I believe, in large numbers all the country over,—wise, holy, faithful men, who are "a comfort" to their pastors, and invaluable "helps" to the Churches; fulfilling their office with devoted assiduity, prudence, and zeal; and, allowing for human infirmity, worthy of the highest commendation and praise. I say this from, I think, some extensive acquaintance with pastors and Churches in the course of my life, in London and in the provinces, north and south. I fear they do not, at all times, receive the encouragement they deserve.

I cannot content myself with referring to brethren of the Congregational body, and to such

others as were almost one with them in doctrine and discipline. In a large place like Manchester, and with the incessant demands of so stirring a community, small chance is afforded for extensive and close fellowship with ministers and members of religious denominations other than our own. Yet there was a kindly general intercourse maintained between all evangelical parties in the town and neighbourhood.

Before Mr. Tucker's time, a highly respected Baptist minister occupied the pulpit at York Street Chapel, long since taken down,—Mr. John Birt, son of Isaiah Birt, and brother of Caleb Birt, sometime at Portsea, and afterwards at Broadmead, Bristol. He was a man of large acquirements and literary tastes, but not a popular preacher. He was the author of a very ingenious work entitled *Patristic Evenings*, in which a large variety of instructive facts and sentiments are brought together in a most interesting manner, in the form of dialogue, without the names of the supposed speakers. It is a *conversazione*, conducted in a strikingly skilful and entertaining way. Mr. Birt was himself a man of a most genial and courteous spirit.

Close to Rusholme Road were two important Wesleyan circuits, and during my residence it was my privilege to become more or less acquainted, personally as well as in their public

ministerial capacity, with many beloved and highly honoured men of the Wesleyan body; and it is a pleasant thing indeed for me to recall them to remembrance. The first whom I knew was that great man, Richard Watson, author of the *Christian Institutes*. I had heard him, when I was a student, preach at the opening of the Liverpool Road Wesleyan Chapel. It was a marvellous discourse, neither rhetorical nor emotional in the least degree, but deliberate, grave, solid, sententious, like *thinking aloud*. Every sentence was food for thought; a distinct, weighty, pregnant text; a separate nugget of gold. The sermon was an exposition of the first six verses of Eccles. xi. I have often wished I could recall some of his pithy, powerful, aphoristic utterances, so full of enlightening and impressive wisdom.

When starting on my journey to Manchester to commence my work as a pastor there, an elderly gentleman, whom I took to be some "Manchester man," was waiting, with myself, for the coach at the Spread Eagle. We entered the coach, and he almost immediately took out a pamphlet and began to read. Unfortunately, I had omitted to take anything of the kind with me; but as we went down Newgate Street, the coach drew up for some passengers, and it was right opposite a bookseller's shop; so I ran into the shop, and glancing at the row of books on the

counter, I found all were novels except a pocket edition of *Butler's Analogy*. I hastily threw down my money, and jumped with it into the coach again. I felt half ashamed to have it, quite aware how pretentious and pedantic it would look. However, I thought if I could but get a few sentences of it into my head during the journey, *that* would be something. I did my best to conceal the title of the book, but somehow the old gentleman at my side contrived to get a peep at it. Half turning his head, he said in a rather gruff voice, "A hard book that, sir, for a coach." I felt the cut very keenly; and replied, "Yes, sir, I am aware of that"—and then explained the reason of my having it. "Hum!" said the gruff voice, and the pamphlet was resumed; and from that moment until twenty-two hours after, not a word was exchanged between us. Oh, had I but known who was at my side, how should I have longed to draw upon the resources of his richly stored mind! But it was all a blank to me. I have often since thought I knew *one* elderly minister, at least, who would not have travelled with a young man for two and twenty long hours without making some effort to impart to him some good thing. However, as we reached Ardwick Green, Manchester, he said abruptly, "Did you know Dr. Bogue, of Gosport?" "Yes, sir." "A new Independent Chapel has been opened near here; and a young man is settling

there?" "Yes, sir." "Are not you the young man? Is not your name Griffin?" "Yes, sir." "Hum! I thought so." And so ended *our conversation* from London to Manchester. I accounted for his guess of me from his having probably seen a parcel at my side with my name on it. Bogue and Griffin were often associated together in the minds of those who knew they were neighbours and friends, so that the one name recalled the other; it was most likely so in this case. A week after this I was at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society, and was standing by a Wesleyan minister, named Macdonald. The chairman announced a speaker by a name that did not reach me; but the bass, sonorous voice struck me. "Who is that?" I asked Macdonald. "Why, that is our Richard Watson." "Ay, it is he indeed!"—and he had been my fellow-traveller, and that was all I could say about it! But after the meeting, as I was walking up Market Street, the great and truly noble man—though I did not think he behaved very nobly to me—stopped and accosted me, for I had not noticed him. "So, we have been fellow-travellers; I hope we shall meet again." "Thank you, sir; it would be a gratification to me indeed,"—though I own I felt rather sceptical about it. I soon had invitations more than once to meet him at Wesleyan parties, at the house of James Wood, Esq., but in each case it was either on the evening of

my week-day service or of some previous fixed engagement. Mr. Watson was just finishing his term at the Oxford Road Circuit, and I never met him again. Why do I tell so barren a story? Just by way of giving, respectfully, a hint to elder ministers and others to *make use of their tongues*.

Mr. (now Dr.) George Osborn was another of the ministers with whom I soon became acquainted. We met first at a conference of gentlemen invited to a consultation touching the Endowed Schools of Manchester; and I was much struck with the sort of legal acuteness Mr. Osborn displayed in the business. The remarkable development of his administrative ability is known to persons outside the Wesleyan body, as well as to his own denomination. Dr. Robert Newton I also knew, and once heard him preach. He was, I believe, the most *popular* preacher in the body. And no wonder. There was everything in his physique and mental constitution to make him a commanding popular orator, and especially an energetic *preacher*: a masculine frame, a noble form, a powerful well-toned voice, entire self-possession, a clear head, warm and stirring emotions, cast of thought and style of exposition and illustration eminently suited to popular wants, capacities, and feelings; scriptural, pointed, earnest, impressive. The announcement of his name would everywhere

ensure a full congregation. Then there was William Arthur, a very different man, quiet, thoughtful, spiritual, sweet, in a remarkable measure. I once heard him preach in my own pulpit, for the Jews Society. It was a well thought out, fervid, but especially tender discourse, such as might have been expected from the writer of that valuable book *The Tongue of Fire*. Dr. Hannah, too, I knew well, for he was a fellow-secretary with me of the Jews Society—a sound, solid, weighty man. John Rattenbury was another, a sort of revivalist, full of zeal—and very productive zeal it was. It was said a large increase to the membership of the Wesleyan Church took place in Manchester while he was there. Dr. Dixon was another. I heard him also in my own pulpit, on behalf of the London Missionary Society, from the words, “They are the messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ,”—a very able and powerful sermon. Dr. Dixon was the father-in-law of my respected friend, Professor Williamson, of Owens College, now the Victoria University. I once heard Dr. Jabez Bunting at, if I remember rightly, the Liverpool Road Chapel, Islington. I remember, at least, well enough the impression he produced on me. He appeared to me one of the most finished, perfect public speakers I had ever heard; as, I believe, he was universally acknowledged to be. His sermon I do not recollect,

which I wish indeed I did; but his radiant countenance, his calm and dignified attitude, his sonorous voice, the air of, so to call it, gentlemanly culture that was spread over all, and the singularly lucid and convincing order of thought, are not easily to be forgotten. I was a young man *then*, and I fear that the external and adventitious in connection with preachers and preaching occupied my mind more than it ought to have done; and hence my recollections of it are the stronger. Dr. Bunting, as everybody knows, was especially pre-eminent as a ruler and administrator. His statesmanlike capacities would have made him a fine Chancellor of the Exchequer—or, as to that, a Prime Minister of a high order—if statesmanship had been his craft; that is, in the good old Tory times, for in the present times I suppose his political principles would prove to be a day too late. But, anyhow, he would have made a capital bishop. I cannot help fancying there was considerable resemblance of mind and character between Dr. Bunting and Bishop Wilberforce, but it may be only a fancy.

My first time of meeting him personally was in a way very interesting to myself. It was at a meeting on behalf of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in Grosvenor Street Chapel, Chorlton, Manchester. It was a crowded meeting. I had just risen to speak, when a great buzz and stir at

the doors interrupted me, and at once a cry arose on the platform, "Dr. Bunting! Dr. Bunting!" as the doctor was seen advancing towards it. It was his first public appearance after an accident he had met with in the House of Commons; he had broken his leg in stepping over the seats in the Speaker's gallery. He was, of course, welcomed with all the more enthusiasm. So soon as he had taken his seat, and the excitement had subsided, I immediately said it would be unbecoming of me to occupy the time of the meeting, impatient as they could not but be to hear the reverend doctor; and after a few words about the object of the meeting, I resumed my seat. He at once came forward, and with much courteous expression of regret on account of the interruption, said, "I learn that the gentleman who has just sat down is a son of Mr. Griffin, of Portsea. I have not the pleasure of knowing his father personally, but I know him well by his works and his public character—a great and good man. I cannot express a better wish for his son than that he may be as good and as great as his father."

I offer no apology for relating this incident. No wise parent, and no affectionate and reverent son, will reproach me for accepting and reciting with pleasure so worthy a tribute to my father's name, presented by so distinguished a man as Dr. Jabez Bunting. I feel it not improper to

say, the doctor is not the only one of such eminence who has expressed similar sentiments, and in terms almost identical with his.

During my time, there were in Manchester many excellent and laborious ministers of the Established Church. Hugh Stowell (afterwards Canon Stowell) stood head and shoulders above his brethren: a man of a strong, courageous, energetic spirit, "valiant for the truth," but not always in the most judicious way. The fervour of his zeal sometimes overbore his prudence, not to say his charity. He was always looked for as a great power on the platform of the Bible Society. The meetings of that Society in Manchester were really memorable occasions. For some time there were morning meetings at the Town Hall, and I own I was astonished at the large number of gentlemen of all denominations who left their offices and counting-houses to attend them. When the old Free Trade Hall was built, which had sitting room for six thousand persons, the meetings were held there in the evening in order to popularize the interest. That good man and true bishop in the Church, Dr. John Bird Sumner, then Bishop of Chester, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, usually presided. The hall was always densely thronged, the working-men attending in vast numbers. It was a great time for Mr. Stowell, for he was just the man to confront the masses, and he delighted

to "stand up for Jesus" in their presence. The animation of the man was something wonderful. In five minutes or so he was at boiling heat, his whole frame—and it was a noble one—quivering and agitated as if he were standing on an electric stool. He never spoke—at least when I heard him—without infidels and Roman Catholics coming in for a large share of his notice. But an intelligent friend told me, after I left Manchester, that in one of his last speeches she heard him say, "I used to be much alarmed about the spread of Popery in our country, but I have now come, I grieve to say it, to be much more alarmed by its influence in our Church." Canon Stowell was a faithful servant of Christ, and a blessing in his generation.

Mr. McGrath, first at St. Anne's, and then at a church built for him at Kersall Moor, was a beautiful preacher. I once heard him in Lent, and was much impressed by his sermon on Repentance, feeling my heart warmly drawn to the good man. Besides these there were many evangelical clergymen diligently at work in various parts of the town—Mr. Huntingdon, of St. John's; Mr. Birch, of St. Saviour's; Dr. Burton, of All Saints'; Dr. Carpenter, at Greenheys; Mr. Maguire, of St. Luke's; Mr. Nunn, of St. Stephen's; and others whose names have escaped me. The last named was a high Calvinist—a most spiritually minded, devout man,

as I have found very many of the "High Calvinists" to be. The account I had of his death from his pious and amiable widow, soon after his decease, led me to say, "Let *me* die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." With all these excellent clergymen it was my privilege to enjoy more or less of friendly intercourse, and I love to remember them.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Joshua Wilson—Acquaintance with him in London, and at Hastings—His fidelity to the truth—Sceptics, how to treat them—Vague, indefinite preaching—Culture—Scholarship—Respectability—Ethics—Sir James Stephen—Robert Hall—McAll on preaching—Pamphlet of Mr. J. Wilson.

IN his letter, Dr. Waddington refers to a name known to all the Churches, and as highly honoured as it is widely known; of whom I can never think but with a feeling amounting to veneration; a man of so saintly a character, but of such sensitive meekness, such unfeigned humility, so shrinking from all honour, except that which cometh from God alone, that it seems almost a violation of propriety to say anything about him. It is as if at this moment I heard him deprecating everything like laudatory allusion to himself. A few lines, however, respecting him may surely be permitted.

I had known Mr. Joshua Wilson at his father's house when I was a student at Highbury College, and even then had been struck with those traits in his character to which I have adverted;

and it was felt to be no light privilege to renew the acquaintance with him more intimately, on his frequent visits to this beautiful watering-place, with his amiable family, as well as at their hospitable home at Tunbridge Wells, where ministers of the gospel were always welcomed.¹ Besides the attraction of the family circle, and of the society of the many valued friends who occasionally joined it, there was that magnificent library, which was being so continually augmented as to threaten to fill the whole house with books, and from which such multitudes have been transmitted to the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street, and to different colleges, according to the generous purpose of their owner.

Mr. Wilson was not a mere collector of books : he was a most insatiable and critical reader, as the multiplied marginal notations scattered throughout the pages abundantly attest. I well remember when a student meeting him one day coming from the City with two or three books under either arm, which he was hugging as tightly with his elbows as if they had been the dearest treasure of his heart, and another that

¹ Since writing the above Mrs. Wilson has passed to her rest. If ever a wife was a "help meet" for her husband, she was one. Intelligently and lovingly entering into all Mr. Wilson's views and feelings, an ardent lover of the gospel and the cause of Christ, and the generous friend of His servants, of whatever denomination, she was the solace and support of her honoured husband from the day of their marriage till his death.

he was reading in his hands. I did not venture to interrupt him in his peripatetic studies; but if I could at that moment have turned back with him, he should not have had to carry the books himself. How far, however, he was to be congratulated on his omnivorous appetite for books may be doubted, for voraciousness of reading is not always the most conducive to a habit of vigorous and independent thinking.

As Dr. Waddington intimates, Mr. Wilson was very anxiously concerned for the vital interests of the Churches, and not a little fearful that a tendency was being manifested in some quarters to depart from the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Mr. Wilson's deep piety and loving and gentle spirit assure us that he would be the last person disposed to judge others uncharitably, or to be an accuser of the brethren; and no one can suppose that he was an ignorant, narrow-minded dogmatist, adhering to old "shibboleths" and "traditional creeds," incapable of appreciating the importance of the growing enlightenment and intelligence of the age. Trained for the Bar, a member of the Inner Temple, of gentlemanly and cultivated tastes, he was not a man to disapprove of the advancing culture of the dissenting ministry. He was disposed rather to fastidiousness of taste than otherwise. Robert Hall was his *beau ideal* with regard at least to purity of style. But he

felt that there was something of far greater importance than correctness of style or any form or degree of mere literary culture, and greatly pressed by anxiety with regard to the tone of the ministry and the state of the Churches, he could not refrain from giving expression to his feelings in those kindly but earnest remonstrances on the subject which came from his pen.

And surely he is to be honoured for his fidelity, for I suppose it will not be contended that no one ought to have the courage of his convictions, except those who dissent from "orthodox" views. Why should men not utter their misgivings when circumstances appear sufficient to awaken their alarm? While so many glory in scattering broadcast around them the seeds of doubt and disbelief—why are believers to be silent, or to speak with bated breath?

"But the men whom we dislike are your positive, self-asserting, disdainful dogmatists,—positive and disdainful, often, in proportion to their ignorance. For honest doubters we have much respect, but none at all for such men as these." And most justly. Honest doubt and earnest though hesitating inquiry are always to be treated with respect and sympathy. It is "with meekness we are to instruct those that oppose themselves." Every consideration of thoughtful charity should prompt us to this. No mortal is infallible. Many of the great problems

of spiritual and moral truth are insoluble by human reason. Difficulties involve and press us on every hand respecting the Divine existence and the Divine government, the nature, history, and destiny of man, and not a few questions connected with the evidences, facts, and doctrines of the Scriptures; and many a firm believer in the verities of Christianity has reached his settled and blessedly satisfying resting-place through many a darkening speculation and many a perilous and anxious conflict. It is not for us, therefore, to treat with any other feeling than that of sincerest sympathy those who may be passing through the same mental trials. Besides, we know not the peculiar causes, personal to themselves, which may have led the supposed sceptics into disbelief or doubt, and may be preventing, in a considerable degree, their extrication from it. And if we ourselves are at rest in the belief of the "truth as it is in Jesus," with relation especially to its fundamental facts and doctrines, and feel that we are standing on sure ground from which we shall never be "greatly moved," let us not forget either the preventing providence to which perhaps we owe it, in the teaching and training and many happy influences that have tended to the establishment of our minds and hearts; or the grace that has led us, it may be, by much studious thought and many prayers and tears, out of darkness into light. And true

desire to lead the perplexed and unhappy doubters into the light and joy of God's salvation ought to make us very patient and tender with them; for not a few, it may be feared, have been repelled by coldness, and even harshness, who might probably have been drawn and won by different treatment to Christ Jesus and his Gospel.

Nevertheless, when doubters and those who are *only* "inquirers," all their life long, assert a special claim to *deference*, it is time to ask, Why should it be yielded? Why should honest doubt be considered more worthy of respect than honest belief and certitude, carefully acquired as the result of study, devotion, reasoning, and experience? Doubt has nothing in itself, simply considered, worthy of respect, or the contrary. Why, then, should "seekers of truth" who never find it be thought more deserving of esteem than those who have both sought and found it? Besides, it is as easy to assume that all doubt and unbelief are *honest*, as it is to take for granted that all professed belief is *intelligent* and *sincere*.

Indolence is ready enough to substitute "inquiry" for investigation, and is often too conceited as well as too careless to use with diligence and serious purpose the means that lead to knowledge and conviction. It is, at least, quite within the range of human possibilities that there may be silly men in the world, as well as "silly women,

who are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." At any rate, why are all to stand still until these never-satisfied seekers have come to a settlement about their beliefs or their no-beliefs? Of courtesy and kindness to persons in error, or whose opinions differ from our own, let there be no stint; but of concession to unscriptural principles not a jot. It is possible in such matters to be too complaisant. Sentimentality of this sort *is not a virtue*. If it had its way it would shut all our mouths, or, at least, make us falter in our utterance and palter with truth. Honesty may, of course, be sincerely asserted on both sides, but that does not settle the question of *truth*.

Of actual departures or declensions from the truth I have had little personal knowledge. For it is my happiness to be able to testify that of all the ministers—and they have been very many during more than half a century—with whom I have been associated, whether in the northern or the southern counties, only four, as far as I am aware, have turned from "the faith once delivered to the saints," or failed to declare it with more or less of distinctness and decision.

Yet, although I am able to bear such a testimony, it cannot be denied that Mr. Joshua Wilson's anxiety was far from being groundless. Facts appeared to be too numerous and too patent to admit of question. Mr. Wilson was

by no means alone in his anxiety. From various parts of the country, and from different classes of people, complaint had been heard from time to time of dissatisfaction with the tone of the ministry—a complaint that, if the cardinal truths of the gospel were not formally denied, they were presented so infrequently and in so vague and indefinite a manner as that the people might be almost said to be without the gospel. One may hope that in such reports there was often much exaggeration; that they were sometimes founded on partial information, if not unjust prejudice. No doubt we ought to be on our guard against sweeping and indiscriminate charges, and against the hasty and hard judgments of censorious persons, who would “make a man an offender for a word.” Still, it would be worse than idle to say that those reports were altogether without foundation when not a few preachers and writers were openly and confidently telling us that the religious teaching of the present day ought to be very different, not only in form and style, but in substance also, from that of our fathers; that the theological beliefs of their days are undergoing, and ought to undergo, a change all but radical; and that, in effect, a new Christian economy is to be introduced among us. If this class of sentiments, or anything like them, is becoming popular, we may well pause and reflect before we denounce those

who with sincerity and depth of grief deplore it as "crotchety persons" or "heresy hunters."

Tendency to an infrequent and vague exposition of the gospel may be probably traceable to a variety of causes. *Idolatry of scholarship and culture* would seem to be one of them—perhaps the most prominent in the present day. All generations and classes of mankind have been prone to some species of idolatry, and "the wise and prudent of this world" have been not the least conspicuous among them. Philosophers have had *their* idol, philosophy—not seldom "falsely so called;" scientists have *theirs*, science; men of scholarship and general culture, *theirs*. When deference to mental acquisition and mental power, to human opinions and human thought, displaces in any degree reverence for Divine revelation and Divine teaching, to that degree it is idolatrous. Too often has it had that effect, sometimes in a most disastrous measure. Watts and Doddridge, both of them eminently scholarly and cultivated men, bitterly lamented its prevalence in their day; and we know how its prevalence led to the declension of vital godliness in the Churches and to the spread of Socinianism and Deism among the so-called men of thought.

It would be no good omen if ministers and students were more desirous of being regarded as men of culture and free thought than as

“able ministers of the New Testament;” and if Churches were more concerned to obtain so-called cultured men as their ministers than wise, holy, and useful ones. And it would be not to the glory of our colleges, but to their dishonour, if they came to rest their reputation upon the literary acquirements and academic honours of their *alumni* rather than upon filling the pulpits of the land with a ministry of evangelical and spiritual power.

And, after all, mere scholarly culture is nothing to be boasted of. *High scholarship*, no doubt, implies the possession of high mental qualities, such as keen critical acumen, discriminative judgment, large acquisitive faculty, and much philosophic, as well as philological, insight. But scholarship, commonly so-called, is no proof of high intellect, or even of good sense. Innumerable facts prove this. Plodding diligence and a retentive memory may suffice to give a man a respectable position in the way of scholarship. To be really “a master in Israel” is a very different thing. Scholastic genius is a noble endowment, but *not the noblest*.¹

¹ It is hoped the above remarks will not be supposed to imply in the slightest degree an intended depreciation of scholarly culture, the very richest and ripest, on the part of our ministers. Any such depreciation would be utterly absurd, and as utterly at variance with the writer's feelings. It is the misapplication and perversion of mental culture that is deprecated.

Owing partly, perhaps, to this overweening estimate of literary culture, and partly to various social influences operating powerfully around us, an eager desire is sometimes felt to secure the attendance at our sanctuaries of the more educated and opulent classes, or, at all events, respectable people, not seldom tending, it may be feared, to a comparative disregard of the humbler and less instructed class. It is admitted, of course, that an earnest desire and effort to draw the cultured and the wealthy to Christ and His gospel are in the highest degree commendable. But we need to be very seriously on our guard lest we "enter into temptation" in this matter. Our own peculiar tastes, our idiosyncrasies, and our supposed aptitudes and qualifications may incline us to think they indicate in our case a special providential design. No doubt this conception may be in some respects correct. Yet it may lead us astray. We may commit a great error if we imagine that we have a commission to the well-conditioned and the cultured any more than to other classes, and *a very grievous one indeed* if we think we are permitted to modify in any wise God's revelation of truth in order to suit their conceptions or tastes. Attempts of this kind must always be fatal to the accomplishment of the great designs of the Christian ministry; for it is not to be expected that God will honour with His approval and blessing those who do not

“stand in His counsel” and faithfully teach the truth as He has revealed it. Sometimes, no doubt, factitious success may be secured for a time by sensational or secondary methods, but these usually fail after a while, and ministerial comfort, reputation, and ostensible success fail along with them; for the Lord hath said, “Them that honour Me I will honour; but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.”

This eager desire to secure a “respectable congregation”¹ has often proved a snare to a minister, and to the people also; marring the ministry in many ways, and sadly leavening the Church with the spirit of the world. It has not unfrequently led to the cultivation of a style of preaching not favourable to the profit of the great body of the people, or, indeed, of any class at all. But, worse still, it has prompted an endeavour to make the religion of Jesus Christ, and profession of faith in Him, coalesce with—not conquer and expel—the spirit of the world; so to tone down the humbling and sanctifying doctrines and principles of the New Testament, as to bring them into harmony with the sentiments, feelings, and habits of respectable but not

¹ At a special prayer meeting held at Manchester, during the Anti-Corn Law Conference, that quaint but shrewd old Calvinist, William Gadsby, said in his prayer, with his peculiar and most expressive tone, “We beseech thee to keep the Churches from being swallowed up of what they call respectability.”

godly society. It has been apparently hoped to make people Christians, and to lead them to heaven, without conducting them through "the strait gate," and along "the narrow way that leadeth to life,"—to the last degree a vain and pernicious hope. There is a kind of preaching which might seem to be designed only to keep people *easy and comfortable*, at the expense of truth, of holiness, and of the "peace of God;" a sort of preaching that might seem intended to clash with no one's unscriptural sentiments, to offend no one's worldly spirit, to convince no one of sin, to disturb no one's conscience, and, therefore, to awaken in no one's mind an anxious concern to seek "the great salvation," "and the people love to have it so."¹ And in connection with such preaching, there is usually quite as little to excite and nourish the serious solitudes or the happy affections of the Christian heart. With ministries of this sort, it were vain to look for spiritual life or growth in the Churches. "Of thorns, men do not gather grapes, nor of thistles, figs." May it never be said of any of us, "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace."²

¹ Jer. v. 31.

² When I was a very young minister, my honoured friend and my father's friend, the Rev. J. A. James, said to me, "Aim at the conscience, my young friend, aim at the conscience." I had learned the importance of doing so, long before Mr. James spoke

The doctrines of the Cross, and the holy principles of the gospel, are not more welcome to the men of the world in the enlightened age in which we live, than they were to those of the age in which the apostles lived. As they were then "an offence" or "foolishness" to the Jew or to the Greek, so they are now to the men of our times, though not for the same specific reasons. And as the apostles did not endeavour to adapt the gospel to the sentiments and spirit of their times, but to correct those sentiments by the teaching of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and to subdue that spirit by the power of his gospel, we must do the same. That is alone our legitimate aim; and it can only be accomplished by a clear and earnest manifestation of the very same truth which they proclaimed—by the full and distinct exposition, and enforcement of "the gospel of the grace of God." But the power of the gospel may be as completely neutralized as if its divinely revealed doctrines were categorically denied, by being veiled under a style of composition, and a cast of phraseology that will hardly admit of their being either recognized or felt.

In relation to the subject of the ministry, I

to me, from one of the wisest and holiest of ministers that ever lived, and from my first and deeply venerated theological tutor, Dr. Bogue; and I *can* say that much as I have always felt its importance, I feel it now in my old age *more than ever*.

may be permitted to introduce a passage, though a lengthened one, from the discourse of Dr. McAll on the evening of my ordination—partly, as apposite to the purport of the foregoing remarks, and partly, I own, as a record of the past of deeply solemn interest to myself. As the sentiments of a man of such attainments and such splendid powers as those of McAll, they cannot but have the greater weight. “Nearly allied,” he says, “to this caution is another, which we may conceive the Holy Spirit to be now addressing, not to our Churches only, but to those of the age in general; to beware of that which has been so justly called the idolatry of talent, estimating, as of such pre-eminent worth and greatness, the mere endowments of intellect or learning, and still more frequently the mere brilliancy of figurative illustration and play of fancy, that in comparison with them, the sober thought, the cool and temperate judgment, the honest simplicity, and the holy fervour, which were once held in the highest place, and must ever deserve to be regarded as the best and most legitimate distinctions of the ministry, because infinitely the most fitted for usefulness, have sunk almost into disesteem, and those who possess them are too frequently overlooked. That such endowments, when consecrated as they ought to be to the service of Christ and of his people—not employed for the building up of reputation, or

the acquisition of influence,—and when united, as is necessary to their full acceptance in the sight of God, with meekness and humility and singleness of heart, are worthy to be acknowledged as of unspeakable importance, and to call forth the highest exercises of gratitude to Him who gave them, with such lavish goodness, for the common benefit of the faithful—who can deny? But it is obvious that they have too often operated to steal away the mind and affections from the bounteous Giver to the mere recipient, and to produce both a dissatisfaction even with the most devout and practical instructions when they have been wanting, and to foster depraved habit, taste, and feeling, such as we ought most sedulously to watch and correct. . . . Add to this, that though we boast not of that peerless excellence of solid learning, or of profound and penetrating wisdom in the things of God, which formed the ornament and crown of other days, it must yet be confessed that for force, for ardour, for freedom and address, and for all that ministers to the effect merely of popular eloquence, we have, within the last age, seen specimens of ability and of success, such as have been rarely equalled—never surpassed. But from this has arisen, both to preachers and their people, what I must once more call an evil of most formidable magnitude. Preaching has become too much an art, a professional accomplishment, a display of

ingenuity and skill, an exhibition of rhetorical attainments; and too little the plain and serious, and earnest representation of the mind of Christ. The orator has become more conspicuous than the divine, and the ambitious declaimer than the faithful and humble interpreter of scripture. We have sunk down from the noble simplicity of those who 'spoke as the oracles of God,' and who could boast of a holy superiority to the judgment and the partiality of their hearers, remembering that they must soon appear before the Judgment Seat,—alike indifferent to their censure and their applause, while their chief solicitude was only to commend themselves to the Searcher of all hearts, and to obtain the reward, not of human admiration, but of the Divine approval. And multitudes among our hearers have departed, in at least equal measure, from the meek and humble temper of those who received the instructions of the ministry as the words of life and of salvation, the messages of heavenly mercy, the commands of Jesus; and whose only aim was to improve in all the graces of the Christian character—to be humbled, or reproved, or informed, or edified, recollecting that for every Sabbath of rest, and every season of worship, they would have to answer the behest of the great Judge. *We* have become studious and careful in all the niceties of phrase and gesture, or emulous of the loftier fame of bold-

ness, and genius, and originality: and *they* have learnt to listen, only as to the lovely song and the pleasant voice, or to the laboured demonstration and the touching appeal, or to the high and thrilling strains of impassioned oratory; and all the while conscience is lulled into the deepest slumber, sin lurks undetected in the inmost soul, the love of God and the desire of holiness are acquiring no increase of efficacy and vigour,—the tear which trembles in the eye, and the smile which plays across the features, is not the tear of penitence nor the smile of holy joy, prompted by the sense of pardon or the hope of heaven; but all is taste, mere taste,—and the effects which follow it are transient and unsubstantial as a dream. We must return, my brethren, to the simplicity of our forefathers. We must rise even higher, to the standard of apostolic zeal and self-oblivion. Man must be less regarded both by the speaker and his hearers. God must be all in all. *We* must lose sight of ourselves in our efforts to insure your salvation; and *you* must ‘account of us, only as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.’ We must resolve to make known all the truth, ‘whether you will hear or whether you will forbear,’ and you must be willing to receive from us, without criticism and a spirit of vain and dangerous refinement, the plainest lessons, the homeliest and directest reproofs, the most solemn warnings, the boldest

declarations relative to every part of the Divine counsels, and the reiterated inculcation of duty both personal and social, without the remotest attempt at ornament, or the least shadow of reserve."

A sound doctrinal theology must be the firm basis of all good and weighty pulpit instruction. This is too much neglected in the present day.

I believe it is said that less attention has been given of late to dogmatic theology, for the purpose of giving more to ethical teaching and practical Christianity than was usual in the past age. That there is much good intention in this design need not be doubted; and there may be some truth in the allegation, that moral teaching was not characteristically so specific and explicit in the evangelical ministry of the past day, as might have been desired, at least in some quarters. But this may be readily accounted for on consideration of the "high and dry," the heartlessly ineffective teaching of the preceding age; it was just a reaction from one extreme to another, and another reaction to an opposite extreme is happening in our time. Good as the design may be, the wisdom of the method adopted with a view to its accomplishment may be more than doubted. The religious history of our country during the present century should be sufficient to instruct us. The happy improvement in the tone of moral sentiment and feeling, and in the general moral habits of society, in the

present day, as compared with those of fifty or sixty years ago, cannot have escaped the notice of any intelligent observer. But that improvement, as to its most prominent features, is distinctly and mainly traceable to "the Evangelical School," both within and outside of the Established Churches of England and Scotland, the influence of whose teaching and example was rising, during the early years of the century, like the coral isles of the Pacific, silently and slowly to the surface from the depths of the sea. It is in connection with this important fact, that Sir James Stephen reminds us that "the theology of any age at once ascertains and regulates its moral stature."¹ If it be an indubitable fact that we owe the morality of our day so largely to the theological teaching of that party, it scatters to the winds "the gainsaying of foolish men" in opposition to definite doctrinal instruction, which they so weakly, unworthily, and perniciously decry, under the *cant* terms of "creed," "dogma," "traditional theology," and the like,—a mere perversion of terms to suit a purpose; or, as if theology were not the noblest science to the study of which a human being could devote his intellect. Much, however, of this idle talk arises from thoughtless indiscrimination, the failing to distinguish genuine, intelligent belief of scriptural doctrines from

¹ *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, vol. ii. p. 67.

ignorant acceptance of humanly formulated and prescribed "creeds," and from merely speculative, dead, inoperative faith. Concurrence of belief may flow on for ages, and yet not be *mere* traditional faith. The application of the same terms to ideas so essentially different, is the way to insure the perpetuation of stolid religious ignorance, and "stereotyped" infidelity and irreligion. For, after all, there is plenty of borrowed unbelief in the world as well as traditional faith. We may be sure then, that if cause and effect be inseparably united, a wide and general departure from the evangelism that has brought us such valuable blessings would be followed, sooner or later, by a correspondent deterioration of the morality of our people, or at least would leave us only such a morality as is the precursor of death.

Long before Sir James Stephen wrote the pregnant sentence I have cited, Robert Hall had written, "A lax theology is the parent of a lax morality. The peculiar motives, accordingly, by which the inspired writers enforce their moral lessons, the love of God and the Redeemer, concern for the honour of religion, and gratitude for the inestimable benefits of the Christian redemption have no place in the fashionable systems of moral instruction. Thus even morality itself, by dissociating it from religion, is made to cherish the love of the world, and to bar the heart more

effectually against the approaches of piety.”¹ I should like to have transferred the whole of the paragraph from which the above sentences are an extract, applicable as it is, more or less, to the present period. For surely the sentiments of such a writer as Robert Hall cannot but be thought worthy of profound attention. They were, at least, so regarded by men of the first rank in intellect and literary distinction in his own day, and it may be hoped that he is thought not altogether unworthy of notice even in this remarkable age of modern culture.²

¹ *Sentiments Suitable to the Present Crisis*, vol. i. p. 160.

² I have many times been asked whether I ever heard Robert Hall preach. My reply has been, I never heard, but I once saw him preach. It was at Great Queen Street Chapel, the Wesleyan, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, when I was a student at Highbury College. I thought I had secured a favourable position in the side gallery. Mr. Hall conducted the whole service, if I remember rightly, resting his right arm on the Bible, just as he is represented in Dr. Olinthus Gregory's memoir of him. He stood perfectly still the whole time, with his large brilliant eyes looking straight before him. I strained with breathless eagerness to catch his words, as did everybody else of the vast assembly; but though I saw his mouth open and shut with amazing rapidity, not a sound reached my ear from beginning to end. I was grievously disappointed; but I had an unexpected compensation the next day. I was sitting in my study when I heard a knock at my door. Thinking it was a fellow-student, I said, "Come in," and to my astonishment, our "Chancellor," Mr. Thomas Wilson, walked in, accompanied by Mr. Hall. Mr. Wilson had told him my name, for he instantly said, "I find your name is Griffin, and that you are the son of Mr. Griffin, of Portsea, sir. I am happy to see you for your own sake, and for your father's sake. I have not the pleasure of knowing him personally, but I know him well

In the last sentence quoted, Mr. Hall touches the core of a deep and never-to-be-forgotten truth, that morality is not "religion." Morality, or at least certain forms of it, may be "dissociated" from it. "The form of godliness" is not its "power;" and the form may exist where the power may be not only absent, but thoroughly hated. Therefore, while the moral aspect of individual character, and of society at large may be outwardly decorous and fair, the spirit of the world, which "is not of the Father," may be powerfully ruling in the heart and in the life. Morality, in this view of it, may characterize society as a thing of good taste, of unquestionable propriety, of educational habit, of respectable tone, of fashionable refinement—nothing more. The fear and love of God, regard to His revealed will, obedience to His laws, aspiration after holiness, love to Christ—in a word, "the sanctification of the Spirit"—may have nothing to do with it. "The mind," according to Scripture phrase, may still be "carnal," and "the carnal mind," as we learn from the same authority, is "enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; and to be carnally minded is death." A superficial and

by his writings, and by his reputation; a great and good man, sir: I hope you will be as great and as good as your father; a better and a greater man you cannot be. Good morning, sir." And Mr. Hall vanished, leaving me not a little gratified.

specious morality hides from men a knowledge and conviction of this deep truth, and with it a sense of their danger and their need of the Divine mercy as revealed in the gospel. "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and according to our knowledge of sin will be our appreciation of grace. But when "the law is made of no effect" by men's disregard and ignorance of it, no wonder that the gospel should be so too; that the offers of Divine mercy and the provisions of Divine grace should be disregarded; and that, in fact, the doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit should be treated as a superstition, and the Saviour's atonement as a myth.

These remarks, suggested by allusion to Mr. Wilson's concern about the ministry, must be brought to a close. They shall be so by a short quotation from an admirable pamphlet of his, entitled *The Power of the Pulpit*, in which he makes most earnest and pungent appeals to students and ministers on behalf of a full and explicit preaching of the gospel, and which might well be perused by them with serious thoughtfulness. Would that such appeals were more willingly listened to than they are. "I cannot refrain," writes Mr. Wilson, "from expressing my own firm conviction that if the hope of more frequent conversions in all our congregations is to be realized, it will only be as the result of Paul's gospel, the gospel of the Cross, being preached

in all its unmutilated fulness, and in all its purity and simplicity—unmixed, undiluted, undebased by any admixture of human philosophy ; in a word, just as Paul preached it, “ declaring unto men the testimony of God,” with great boldness and courage, with great plainness and even familiarity of speech, with great earnestness and affection, with great energy and power, that the saving truth may be intelligently believed and cordially accepted.”

These are weighty words. They are the words of a highly educated layman. It may well put us to the blush to think how many of the Christian laity surpass some trained ministers in their knowledge and appreciation of those great vital truths that are essentially connected with the conversion of sinners, and the spiritual edification of believers.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that our duty, our honour, our usefulness, the welfare of souls committed to our care, and, above all, the approval of “ the Master,” are essentially and unalterably involved in our keeping closely and faithfully to the Scriptures, revealing, as they do, the mind and will of God in relation both to doctrine and precept,—“ to the law and to the testimony,” whoever may accept or reject it, “ whether men will hear or forbear ;” adopting and adhering to the noble avowal of the Apostle of the Gentiles, “ I am not ashamed of the Gospel

of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ;” and deeply pondering the still extant, unrepealed pronouncement of our Lord and Judge, “ Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with His holy angels.”

CHAPTER V.

Legh Richmond—*Annals of the Poor*—*Village Dialogues*—Rowland Hill—His labours and usefulness—His letters to me—My visit to Wotton-under-edge—Description of Mr. Hill in the *Patriot*—Edward Irving—Bible meeting—Apocrypha—Opening of Regent Square Church—Hatton Garden vestry—Dr. Chalmers—My fellow students: Prust, Henry Rogers, Dr. Stoughton, John Watson—Characterization.

SEVERAL of the subsequent narratives, it will be seen, have relation to the poor. In early life I had imbibed a peculiar sympathy with that class,—no doubt, originally from parental influence, for it was a class with whom my father felt strongly united by birth, education, and conscientious principle. He took every suitable opportunity to remind us of this fact, and to counsel us by every sacred motive to steadily and prudently "consider the poor." My own mind was powerfully influenced, too, by some books that I greatly delighted to read. I well remember the subduing effect on my feelings—the effect is scarcely less still—of those charmingly picturesque and touching stories of Legh Richmond in his *Annals of the Poor*—

one of the loveliest little books of its kind in the English language, and written by one of the loveliest of men,—which seem to have spread an air of sacredness over the green hill-sides and romantic glens and beetling cliffs of that eastern end of the Isle of Wight, and to have imparted a *real* consecration to the rustic churchyards where rest the remains of the "dairyman's daughter" and of "Little Jane."

The Dairyman's Daughter, published as a tract, was amazingly popular and useful. The Rev. T. S. Grimshawe, Mr. Richmond's excellent biographer, tells us that "a resolution was passed by the Tract Society to translate it into all the European languages, as far as means and opportunity might occur for that purpose," and that "at home several editions of twenty thousand copies each were printed within a very short period; and the copies which have been circulated in the English alone to the present time"—that is to say, not long after Mr. Richmond's death—"are estimated at two millions."

Would that we could have closer fellowship with Episcopal clergymen of the Legh Richmond, Dr. Marsh, and Mr. Grimshawe type; and that all professed ministers of Christ were imbued with their spirit!

Another book that took a strong hold of me, and which has not lost its hold to this day, was Rowland Hill's *Village Dialogues*. Rowland Hill

is, I believe, supposed by some persons to have been little else than an eccentric ranter, distinguished chiefly by ready declamation, and coarse and vulgar wit. Little do they know of him who have formed such a conception of that remarkable man. The mind that could invent and depict such touching and well-sustained characters and scenes as those relating to Thomas Newman; Farmer Littleworth; the conversion and return of Henry, his son; the family of the Worthys; the story of the Lovelys; and, above all, that model of a true Christian minister, Mr. Lovegood, and many more besides of a different kind—to say nothing of *Antinomianism* and *Socinianism unmasked*,—must have possessed not only deep religious sentiments and sympathies, but also some of the happiest and most effective capabilities of the dramatic art. Undoubtedly broad humour and caustic satire have full play when he is dealing with conceit and folly, or rebuking the fashionable vices of the age; but where shall we find a writer more beautifully and sweetly sympathetic, when he is unfolding the various feelings of the penitent and anxious inquirer, or depicting the beauties of holiness as the genuine effects of the converting and sanctifying grace of God?

Be this as it may, it was given to me, as to thousands besides, to regard Mr. Hill with the profoundest feelings of reverence and love. I so

felt towards him, of course, as my father's friend for forty years, and my own friend, too, on his account. But it was when I thought of his public character, and the work he had done in the service of Christ, that I revered him most. As I thought of his self-denying consecration; of his abundant labours; of the power of his ministry; of the thousands upon thousands who had eagerly listened to his burning words, all the kingdom over; and of the vast numbers who under that ministry, had, by Divine grace, been "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,"—how could I but feel my heart glowing with love to the grand old man, with his "crown of glory"—the hoary hairs of more than eighty winters—on his head! *This* is the class of men—the men who feel that the ministry of the gospel is the noblest work that could be assigned to mortals, "the men who turn the world upside down"—whom one delights to honour and emulate.

The son of a baronet, and educated at Eton and Cambridge, Mr. Hill was by habit as much at home with the higher as with the humbler classes of society. In his freest intercourse with the latter, his natural sentiments and demeanour as a true gentleman never forsook him. He loved what he called a gentlemanly mind, wherever and among whatever class he found it; and he often found it among the lower as well as

among the more elevated ranks, and when he did so it called forth the manifestation of his marked respect. On the contrary, he would sometimes say, "some of the 'right honourables' were nothing better than *right abominables*." Referring, as he loved to do, to *Paul's* humility, gentleness, considerateness, and suavity, he would say—stroking his hair back, as he usually did when he was thinking of something that particularly pleased him—"Paul was a *gentleman*." He was habitually kind and gentle to the poor and the meek: but pertness and rudeness were sure to meet with a quiet rebuke. Of course, there was no assumption. I never knew him to allude, even in the most distant way, to his family position and connections, except once. Calling on him one day, when I was a student, he said, "I wish you had come a few minutes earlier. My nephew, Lord Hill, has just been here. He does not forget his old uncle;" and then added, "The Duke of Wellington owed much to Lord Hill in his Peninsular campaign, and at Waterloo." This was true: and the Government of the day acknowledged it, for on the death of the "Great Duke," Lord Hill succeeded him as "Commander-in-Chief."

Mr. Hill well knew the too general character and habits of the rural clergy of those days, their neglect of the spiritual interests of the people, and their incapacity to deal with them; and

when "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" took possession of his soul, he determined, with his characteristic resolution—though an ordained minister of the Church of England, and on many accounts strongly attached to it—to join the ranks of the so-called Methodists, and to follow the course of Whitefield and Wesley, who were then in every direction waking up, by the power of God, the masses of the people from their "death in trespasses and sins," and introducing a new era of religious life to the nation. Of course this was very *disorderly*: no such irregularity could be permitted; so the bishops discountenanced him, and the clergy shut him out of their pulpits. Taking advantage, therefore, of the Toleration Act, he built Surrey Chapel and Wotton Tabernacle, and thus became practically a Nonconformist, though never avowedly a Dissenter. He found what Dr. Chalmers and his co-Disruptionists found, and what many of the clergy of the Church of England are finding at the present day, to their cost, that the attempt to unite bondage and liberty together is a *difficult thing*.

Rowland Hill spent half of each year in London as the minister of Surrey Chapel, the pulpit being occupied during the other half by "supplies" from the country, who resided in the chapel house (Mr. Hill's) for a month or six weeks, conducting all the services on Sabbaths and week days.

During the other half of the year he resided at his house at Wotton, preaching there usually, and making frequent excursions about Gloucestershire, the western counties, and South Wales, attended by vast crowds wherever he went.

When my college term was approaching its close, he was desirous that I should take the superintendence of some rural congregations for whom he felt a lively interest; and though I was unable to comply with his wish, he arranged that I should visit him at Wotton for a week or two, and do what work I might. The following letters will show how minutely thoughtful he was for the comfort of the stripling in the contemplated visit.

“WOTTON, *June 28, 1828.*

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

“Though all things may not exactly suit as we could wish, yet a visit from you at the time you mention will prove to us a very desirable event. But then, just at that time, I am greatly urged to make a visit to Tenby and other parts of South Wales; and the circumstances seem very peculiar to direct me into those parts. And though you being on the spot to supply during my absence would be a peculiar gratification to my mind, yet still it would be a mortifying circumstance not to see anything of you while you are in these parts, as I wish to be much better acquainted with you.

“If I take the Welsh tour I think I could return by the *last Sabbath* in August, or at farthest by the first Sabbath in September; and if you can stop with us so long all things may be made to *square in* just as I could wish.

“If you come during my absence all things will be accommodated for you at this house. There are other congregations that will request your aid, and some friends will drop you some necessary hints concerning such invitations. Some painful circumstances have made divisions in some places. While such divisions might be healed, if some were raised up with this art of healing, others have painfully proved what adepts they have been in the art of dividing. With us, blessed be God, we are perfectly at peace, and our place is perpetually crowded. A pious, discreet young man might do much good among us. Love to all.

“Yours affectionately,

“ROWLAND HILL.

“P.S.—It is probable that Mr. Jones, my assistant, will be with you before my return. My journey to Wales even as yet is not altogether a fixed event.”

“WOTTON, *July 12, 1828.*

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

“I once thought the providence of God seemed to be directing my footsteps into Wales, but as other engagements press upon me nearer

home, and as the increasing infirmities of old age in a great measure prevent me from attending to such labours as will then be required of me in those parts, I have only engaged to visit some places in the vicinage, to attend associations, and make collections on behalf of the London Missionary Society, so that whenever you come I shall be at home or near home to receive you. Only send us word when we are to expect you, that I may set you at work as far as your strength will permit. As you mentioned nothing where you are to be when you are at Manchester, I thought it the safest way first to put it into the hands of Mr. Roby. That you may have a prosperous journey by the will of God, and that the power and blessing of your Master may attend you wherever you go, is the sincere prayer of

“Yours affectionately,

“ROWLAND HILL.”

“WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE, *July 29, 1828.*

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

“You inform me that you will be at this place, August, Saturday 9th, and that you mean to come from Birmingham to this place. You must therefore travel in some of the stages that go from that town to Bristol, and I shall send a conveyance for you to meet you at Newport, a place eighteen miles short of Bristol and about six miles distant from hence. That place is

about seventy miles from Birmingham, and I suppose such stages as start early may set you down there early in the afternoon. A carriage, however, will be in waiting for you at the *Red Lion Inn*, in that place, about noon-day or soon after. I suppose your plan will be to take the first convenient coach that offers; and when you come to the town you will have nothing to do but to mention my name, and that a carriage is to be sent for you by me, the landlord being a friend to the gospel, and you will be treated accordingly. As I shall not return till Saturday, after a little round into Wiltshire and Somersetshire on behalf of the London Missionary Society, I have been obliged to borrow a friend's carriage to bring you to this place, though I suppose we shall meet together at this spot nearly about the same time. I am sorry that your visit is to be so shabby and short; perhaps you may think better of it. Oh, that a Divine blessing may come with you!

“Yours affectionately,

“ROWLAND HILL.”

The visit was one of great enjoyment. Driving about the beautiful neighbourhood, preaching at Wotton or in the adjacent villages, and his own and Mrs. Hill's most kindly and cheerful company at home, made the time pass swiftly and pleasantly along. On his part, conversation was not continuous talk, but, at intervals, and in

short, pithy, shrewd, suggestive sentences, as things struck his mind. I reproach myself that I took no notes of his "table talk." Dry humour was sure to be mingled with it all, which, however it amused me, never altered his apparent gravity for a moment. Two subjects seemed to be constantly in his thoughts, Antinomianism and Socinianism, both of which were his utter abomination. Of the former he had seen some sad specimens in the neighbourhood: the latter was daily before him in the shape of what the Unitarians were pleased to call *The Improved Version of the New Testament*. It had not long before come out, and it lay every day on his table. Its palpable and violent perversions of some of the plainest passages to suit their system excited his scornful indignation; and deeply was he grieved at the dishonour cast upon the name and glory of our Divine Redeemer, and on His sacrificial atonement. On the other hand, he referred with great delight to *Magee on the Atonement*, to Dr. Pye Smith's *Testimony to the Messiah*, and to Dr. Wardlaw's *Discourses on the Socinian Controversy*. He had set himself to write upon the subject, and hence those racy *Dialogues* entitled *Socinianism unmasked*, in which Dr. Dronish, Mr. Smirking, Mr. Spiteful, Mr. Wisehead, and Mr. Considerate take part. For a condensed and striking representation of the leading arguments on both sides many a reader might go

farther and fare worse. When the weather kept him in, he employed himself in cutting out letters which he had got printed in different types, to be arranged in composition of a hymn that he had made for children. These letters were to be put into little card-board boxes, adorned with gold and coloured paper, and then to be taken out by the children, and arranged for the hymn. He was now engaged in making two sets of these for a little nephew and niece of mine; so, morning by morning, he sat with his paste-box at his side and scissors in hand, patiently working away, and dropping now and then, while I sat by, many of those critical and caustic remarks on Socinianism which occur in the *Dialogues*. He would not allow of any other designation. "I am a Unitarian," he said, "as much as they are: I believe no more in three Gods than in thirty."

Immediately after Mr. Hill's death there appeared in the *Patriot* newspaper a beautiful description of his character, probably from the accomplished pen of the then editor, Mr. Josiah Conder, and cited by my father in his published funeral sermon for Mr. Hill, preached at Portsea. It gives so just and vivid a view of my venerated friend that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transferring it to these pages. "It is true that Mr. Hill both said and did things, occasionally, which few other men could have said with good

effect, or done without imprudence. But the unimpeachable integrity and purity of his intentions, the sanctity of his life, the charm of his manners, the dignity and true breeding which rescued from vulgarity his most familiar phrases and his most eccentric actions, conspired to secure for him, through life, the affectionate veneration of all who enjoyed the privilege of his acquaintance, or understood his character. . . . As a preacher, Mr. Hill was extremely unequal, as well as systematically unmethodical; generally rambling, but pithy, often throwing out the most striking remarks, and sometimes interspersing touches of genuine pathos, amid much that bordered on the ludicrous. But even in his most grotesque sallies, there was a redeeming simplicity of purpose and seriousness of intention. You felt that the preacher did not mean to trifle, that there was no attempt at display, no unhallowed familiarity in his feelings, or want of reverence to sacred things. In his more private expository exercises he was generally grave and edifying, with fewer inequalities, and often highly impressive. In the devotional part of the service, he was uniformly chaste, solemn, and fervent. Of late years, the majesty of venerable age that invested his appearance added not a little to the impressive effect of his instructions. We shall never forget his rising to rebuke the tempestuous discord of the Bible

Society Anniversary, held in Exeter Hall, in May, 1831. The keen yet mild reproof came from his lips with almost the force of prophetic authority, and the strong good sense of the few sentences that he uttered, went direct home to the minds of the auditory. His physical powers had long been in a declining state, but his intellectual energies remained almost unimpaired to the end of his existence."

If this very beautiful description did not flow from the pen of Mr. Conder, I cannot but think it betrays the polished style of Dr. Joseph Fletcher, who knew Mr. Hill well and greatly revered him.

This race of great evangelists and preachers is not yet extinct. We have one among us combining in himself some of the best characteristics both of George Whitefield and of Rowland Hill; whose vivid words, so full of apostolic light and fire, are read through all our empire, and wherever there is an English-speaking people in the world. God bless his fervent soul! and again, a thousand times, God bless him! And let all the Churches say, Amen.

Well do I remember the striking scene alluded to in the *Patriot*. Mr. Edward Irving, acting as the representative of the Scotch Committee, had insisted on introducing the Apocrypha question. The chairman tried to induce him to forego the subject at the public meeting, as it was being considered in committee, and, owing to the

way in which he spoke of it, was giving offence to the assembly. He would not desist, and the people continued to show their disapproval; and Irving still persisting in his offensive attitude, a tremendous storm ensued; when, pausing for a moment, he drew up his tall and imposing form to its fullest height, and shaking his long black locks, as a lion might shake his mane when roused to wrath, cried out with a voice of thunder, "Do ye know what spirit ye are of?" and then, folding his arms, stood silent, but still seeming to hurl defiance at the multitude by his stern and terrible gaze. For a moment a death-like silence pervaded the auditory, but only to be broken by wilder tumult, when Rowland Hill, slowly rising from his seat, and surveying the crowd with an inimitable look of mingled amazement, scorn and sadness, said, "I thought I was coming to a Bible meeting, but I find I have come to a bear-garden," and then with a few striking words as to the seriousness of the occasion, and the duty of Christians to one another, he resumed his seat. It was impossible for the people to be angry with the venerable and grand old man; and so, after a minute of silence, they broke first into hearty laughter and then into loud applause; and thus good humour being happily restored, the business of the meeting proceeded quietly to its close.

Mr. Irving's contention, along with his Scottish

brethren and many others, was a righteous and ultimately a successful one: that nothing should be bound up and circulated with the Bible, as though a portion of the Word of God, that was not part and parcel of canonical scripture. But, as Mrs. Oliphant, in her *Life of Irving*, says, "It was not until the whole community was in commotion, and a serious secession threatened, that the London committee came to their senses."

An unaccountable man was Edward Irving; a man of powerful but ill-regulated intellect, with an imagination that ran wild, and carried his reason away with it. Perhaps there was a touch of something not quite sane in his composition; perhaps the worship paid to him partly turned his brain. Certain it is that he lost himself in delusions strange and many. But, notwithstanding his strange developments, his ardent love of "the truth as it is in Jesus," and of vital godliness, cannot be questioned. I am not aware that it ever has been. With all his eccentricities, there was a mighty grandeur about the man; ay, and it was the grandeur of goodness and holiness withal—the very loftiness of his mind and the deep reverence of his heart, unmixed with sobriety of judgment, combining to mislead him.¹

¹ "Nobler man I have seen few if any, till the foul gulphs of London pulpit popularity sucked him in, and tragically swallowed him."—Carlyle, *Reminiscences*.

On his coming to London his popularity speedily became immense. There was no one of any rank or party who did not struggle at some time or other to get into Hatton Garden to hear his marvellous "orations." When his Church at Regent Square was to be opened by Dr. Chalmers, everybody of course wished to gain admission. This was by ticket, and the men of our college sharing the general feeling, determined to apply to Mr. Irving himself. Being senior of the college, a position which had a sort of recognized official character, I was deputed to wait on Mr. Irving for the purpose. I went on the Sunday evening preceding the opening to Hatton Garden, accompanied by Jonathan Glyde, who had an engagement in the neighbourhood. At the close of the service—in the last prayer of which Mr. Irving prayed "that the glory of the Lord might be seen to play around the pinnacles of the new temple"—we followed him into the vestry which was crowded with the elders and many other gentlemen. We addressed him, and stated our errand, mentioning the college we represented. He immediately took my hand in both of his, and replied, in the broadest Scotch, "Ah, my dear brethren, it is a hard thing that ye ask, but for the love I bear your souls, and from regard for the college ye represent, I will e'en plead for you." We had told him in answer to inquiry as to our number,

that though we were forty in all, we ventured only to ask for twenty tickets. "Ah, it is well of ye;" and turning to the committee with amazing formality and solemnity of manner, he said, "Gentlemen, these are students of the College at Highbury: they ask for twenty tickets of admission to the new Church to hear the great and godly Dr. Chalmers: now, I beg of ye to grant them forty." And so the forty tickets were handed to us, which we received with the most respectful gratitude, to carry them home in triumph to our applauding brethren. And so, on the opening day we were found urging our way among the eager crowds that besieged the doors of the Church in Regent Square—Henry Rogers, Edmund Prust, and myself linked arm in arm together. It was the first time of our hearing "the great and godly Dr. *Chawmers*," and a glorious time it was. But it had like to have been marred by Mr. Irving, who conducted the whole of the devotional services himself at an enormous length, followed by a protracted Scotch baptism,—to the extreme vexation of Dr. Chalmers, who was waiting impatiently in the vestry, and to the annoyance of the weary multitude, as Dr. James Hamilton, Irving's successor, many years afterwards told me. But we had ample compensation in the magnificent discourse from those words, in Jer. vi. 16, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths,

where is the good way, and walk therein : and ye shall find rest to your souls,"—a kindly word to all perplexed wanderers in the by-paths and mazes of "modern culture," as well as to all others who have turned aside from the ways of true pleasantness and peace.

The mention of two college friends has made me feel that I cannot bring this chapter to a close without indulging myself in a recollection of the brethren with whom it was my happiness to be associated in student life, more or less intimately,—men who, by the grace of God, have been enabled to maintain an honourable character, and in various ways to promote the cause of our Lord and Saviour—all of them faithfully, and some of them with eminent distinction. Prust and Rogers reading daily together in the same class with myself, we were inseparable companions. Edmund Prust, the friend of my heart, has recently retired from his half-century-long ministry at Northampton, of which he has left a valuable memorial in a published volume of great excellence. I know that he would not like me to say much of him ; otherwise, as a Christian, as a gentleman, as a scholar, and as a minister, my heart would indite of him much good matter. Henry Rogers is gone. I can only trust myself to say of him, that as a fellow-student he was as much distinguished by frank, open-hearted brotherliness as by his brilliant talents. And it

continued through life to the end. When his name had become bruited in the first literary circles, and he had been received as a personal friend by such men as Archbishop Whately, Lord Jeffrey, and Macaulay, he was the same modest, unassuming, warm-hearted brother as at first. Spending some days with him, only a few months before his death, by special arrangement, at Mr. Hadfield's, we found him just the same cordial, genial companion as ever, talking of old times and fellow-students with as much glee as if we had still been chatting in our common hall as formerly. It renews one's youth to think of those happy days of our student-brotherhood. Though head and shoulders above most of us in real ability, he never seemed conscious of any superiority, and to the least gifted of the brethren he was as unaffectedly fraternal in his deportment as if he had stood on a level with the humblest of them in intellect and acquirement. A writer whose contributions to the *Edinburgh* tended not a little to sustain the fame of that distinguished journal when Macaulay and Sir James Stephen had ceased to write in it,—who was pronounced by such a critic as Sir James, in his letter to Lord Jeffrey, “the first polemic of the day,”—and whose productions stand not unworthily side by side in well-furnished libraries with such modern English classics as Macaulay and Stephen and Mackintosh and John Foster

and Robert Hall—is not a writer who will be readily forgotten ; and it were a pity indeed, and something worse, if our students and young ministers failed to be acquainted with them. They would do well to read again and again his *Eclipse of Faith* and its *Defence*, as well as those brilliant and masterly contributions to the *Edinburgh*, and, not less, his *Supernatural Origin of the Bible*. Well-sustained argumentative dialogue is peculiarly sharpening to the wits ; nothing can be more so than the *Eclipse*, except it be its *Defence*,—a reply to Francis Newman's arrogant and vituperative strictures on the *Eclipse*, or rather on its author, whom he affects to disdain as an *Atheist* !

It is refreshing and strengthening to one's mind and heart to get away from misty Germanisms and Carlylisms, and affectations of all sorts, to the clear thinking and the strong English good sense of such a writer as Henry Rogers. His keen perspicacity and soundness of judgment are as remarkable as his salient vivacity and brilliancy of wit. The play of his fancy and his exuberant humour, in the most sportive of their moods, never interrupt or perplex the clear exactness of his reasoning, or his close and faultless logic. The reasoning and the imaginative faculties seem to share with equal supremacy the throne of his intellect, and that intellect is a regal one indeed.

Among the students of my time were other excellent men, some of whom occupied afterwards stations of great importance and usefulness: such as Jonathan Glyde, as intellectually keen as he was lovely in character and beautiful in countenance, and whose biography has been so ably written by the late George Conder; and John Raven, a man of an exceptionally apostolic spirit, and whose ministry was honoured of God in a remarkable degree throughout Suffolk and Essex and many other places; and Byrne, pastor first at Lincoln, and then at the Poultry, and afterwards so long one of the secretaries of the Bible Society; and Ebenezer Prout, the much esteemed Home Secretary of the London Missionary Society; and James Galloway, the well-known energetic Secretary of the English Chapel Building Society; and George Taylor, who was first near Manchester and then at Wellingborough, a man of a vigorous mind and an excellent spirit; and Joseph Wall, one of the most amiable of men, who became one of the annual Classical Examiners at Highbury; and Henry Winzar, a steady, devoted, but very retired minister at Roxton; and David Blow, who founded Brecon College; and Thomas Cousins, my father's respected successor; and Henry Cresswell, a man of a most charming disposition, and with a countenance always beaming with benignity and joyousness, beloved and respected

by all classes at Canterbury, during the fifty years of his truly evangelical, earnest, and useful ministry in that city; and James Sibree, who for the same lengthy period¹ at Hull, so well sustained the honoured name of his father and two brothers; and that jewel in the rough, John Bramall, whose name might well have been "Old Honesty, in the abstract,"—minister in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and afterwards Secretary of Cheshunt College; and John Watson, so thoughtful, so wise, and so deeply devout, predecessor of our eminent friend Dr. Allon, and then President of Hackney College; and Patrick Thompson, who had graduated at Aberdeen before coming to Highbury,² a pastor at Liverpool, at Chatham, and at Manchester, and whose memoirs and sermons have been interestingly edited by his erudite and amiable son, the Rev. Radford Thompson, late of Tunbridge Wells, and now Tutor of Hackney College; and Alexander Reid, who with his friend Thompson had also taken his M.A. at Aberdeen, and who

¹ As to the general desirableness of such lengthened ministries in the same place, I offer no opinion. Let no hard and fast rules be laid down. But let those ministers and Churches receive due honour by whom the connection has been maintained through long years in continued harmony, usefulness, and worthy reputation.

² In those days, the London University did not exist, and as Oxford and Cambridge then admitted no Nonconformists, Dissenters could take a degree only in Scotland or in Dublin, which very few, of course, could conveniently do.

sustained for some fifty years a highly esteemed ministry at Newcastle-on-Tyne; and John Whitby, and Benjamin Johnson, sturdy and useful men, both of them; and last, not least, Dr. John Stoughton, who as Pastor, Professor, Historian, and Divine, has reflected so much lustre on the denomination to which he peculiarly belongs, but whose respected name is cherished as the common property of the whole Church.

Of all these beloved brethren the greater part have "fallen asleep," and those of us who still remain must soon be called to give account of our stewardship. Oh, to find that we and our ministry are approvingly "accepted," at the coming of the Lord, "and our gathering together unto Him"!

I have mentioned the name of John Watson, with whom a circumstance occurred as a student, which I cannot forbear noting; for while it can only honour his memory, it perhaps may have a useful tendency. When I entered Hoxton—for I was there a short time before Highbury College was opened—there were some young men of a more than ordinarily cheerful and even mirthful disposition. In companionship with them, Watson had been excited to moods of sportiveness which he felt in his better moments to be unseemly to his character and calling, and which he feared might lead to a

habit of general frivolity. The thing itself was really nothing more than the fact of these young men disturbing their brethren with their boisterous mirth as they passed along the corridors to their bed-rooms, after the others had retired to rest. But Watson felt that he was impairing his self-respect, and perhaps lowering himself in the esteem of his brethren; but above all he was wounding his conscience as "a man of God." So after one of these escapades he rose at breakfast in the presence of us all, and with deep emotion made a most humble and touching confession of what he considered a serious fault, begging forgiveness of his brethren as he had asked it of God. The tender sympathy the students manifested towards their brother cannot be described. Most of us could only answer him by tears. I have never forgotten the scene, and never shall forget the remarkable change that came over Watson's conduct—I will not say his character, for *that* had never been materially affected—from that day to the day of his leaving college. It was a beautiful instance of conscientious self-control. From that day the most striking gravity seemed to mark his whole demeanour in a degree not a little affecting to his brethren. It was impossible not to predict that Watson would turn out no common man, as was verified indeed through all his after life.

The man that can say to some ensnaring habit, to some unmanly foible, to some vain conceit, to some unchristian-like proclivity—even only to some acknowledged weakness, much more to some besetting sin,—“The Spirit of Christ helping me, *this* shall be no longer,” may anticipate with hopefulness the glad triumphal day when he shall come off finally “more than conqueror, through Him that loved him.”

I am aware that characterizations and memorials, such as those in the foregoing pages, are considered by some persons decidedly objectionable; by some, as a matter of taste, and by others, in point of principle. As a question of taste, no doubt they may be faulty. They may be indiscriminate, overcharged, injudicious and inept, in every way. As a point of Christian principle, I have yet to learn that the thing itself is wrong. We seem to have very high authority for something of the kind. The closing chapter of Paul’s long letter to the “saints” at Rome, is filled with commendatory gratulations to the believers there. They allude to individuals, not to the Church in general, only; those individuals are severally characterized; they are mentioned in warm terms of affection; and their peculiar excellences and good works are noted with sympathetic approbation. All this is done with regard to persons then still living—written in a public document—

a public document which, of course, the apostle desired should be, and was probably certain would be, preserved and transmitted to future generations.

Peter writes to the "sojourners of the Dispersion" of "the wisdom given to his beloved brother, Paul, which was manifest in all his epistles"—and *that* during Paul's own life. The last of all the apostles writes of the character and good works of his "well-beloved Gaius," and is profuse in his application of this epithet to the Christians themselves to whom he writes. And this is he who says, "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Insert the word *only* or *merely*, and we have his clear meaning.

CHAPTER VI.

Whitsuntide at Manchester—Sunday school service at Mosley Street—The three women—Their deaths—Mrs. Turner—Death of my mother—Death of my brother John.

THE Whitsuntide holidays have always been a great time with the Sunday schools of Manchester and the neighbourhood. Thousands of young people are gathered by the teachers and other benevolent friends, with a view in various ways to their pleasure and profit. Many years ago, whatever may be the practice now, one day in the week was devoted, according to arrangement by the different Christian bodies, to religious services conducted by ministers of the town, and attended by vast crowds of young persons of the various schools. At Mosley Street Chapel, since taken down, of which that truly great and holy man, Dr. McAll, was the minister, the service was conducted by a young minister who had recently settled in the town. Just as he was commencing the service, he observed three females standing on the threshold of the chapel as if hesitating to enter. He immediately stretched out his hand,

and beckoning to them, said, "Come in, my friends, come in: no doubt we can find room for you: come in." The women paused for a moment, and then whispering together, all three came in, and were soon accommodated with seats. Their utterly irreligious character may be judged of from the fact that they had just come from the dram-shop, where it had been their wretched custom to get what they sadly called "a little comfort." They stayed during the service, and listened while the young minister spoke from the words, "Come, ye children, hearken unto Me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Psalm xxxiv. 8; Proverbs viii. 32).

When the service was finished the women inquired if the young preacher had a place of worship in the town. A few weeks after, a judicious female member of the Church of which he was the pastor, brought to his lodgings a young woman, apparently under great concern about her soul. This was the youngest of the three women. She had been leading a vicious life, and had not long before left the penitentiary. She now seemed broken in spirit, and longing for Divine mercy. The minister conversed with her at considerable length, and she stated her sad case with evident frankness and deep humility. He pointed her to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of world," and whose "blood cleanseth from all sin," and to that blessed Spirit of all grace whose

power could "create a clean heart within her," and thoroughly purify her from all her pollution. The Saviour's beautiful parable of the prodigal son was set before her as designed to show the loving compassion of our Heavenly Father towards penitent sinners, and His readiness to receive and forgive all who return to Him confessing their sins and desiring really to forsake them. Often did the minister see her, endeavouring to help her forward in that "narrow way" on which she appeared to have most sincerely and earnestly entered. Several pious female friends joined in the same design at his suggestion, and after she had given for some months satisfactory evidence of a real spiritual change of heart and character, she was proposed, at her own request, for fellowship with the Church. At this time her health was failing, and it so rapidly grew worse that her case had to be postponed. At length she said, "I see that it is not the will of God that I should join His people at the Table of the Lord, where I so much wish to testify my love to my dying Saviour, but I shall meet them in His presence." Many times did she express to her minister and other Christian friends, with mingled humility and gratitude, her penitential sorrow for her former life of sin, but at the same time her firm and happy assurance that her sins which were many had all been forgiven her. A short time before her death she said to that faith-

ful friend who had at first brought her to the minister, and who had never ceased to watch over her, stretching out her wasted arm, and beckoning with her finger, "It all began, you know, from that invitation, 'Come in, my friends, come in;'" and then added, "If I should see Mr. Griffin no more, ask him to preach, after I am gone, from the words, 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?'"

Another of the three women was the aunt of the foregoing. She, too, had become well known to the same kind friend, and encouraged and helped by her and others in seeking "the good and right way;" and though not brought, like the other, to the knowledge of the minister, she continued to attend his ministry as often as circumstances would allow. Her distrust of herself was so great that her friend could not induce her to let her case be made known, and before long, she, too, fell into an illness that soon carried her off, but not before her friend had undoubting assurance of her being "enlightened with the light of life," and made "a new creature in Christ Jesus." Some of her last words to her friend were, "It all began from, 'Come in, my friends, come in.'"

The third of the three women had been connected, when young, with a Methodist Sunday school, and though until entering Mosley Street Chapel she had been neglecting the ways of God, from that time she joined the Wesleyan body and

continued to worship with them, and at length, in the presence of the same friend, she closed a consistent life, saying as the others had said, "It was a mercy for me that that young minister invited us so earnestly to 'Come in.'"

As I was not informed of the cases of two of the females till after their death, I should certainly have hesitated to receive the details here given as real and actual facts, if I had not known that I could place the utmost reliance on the simple truthfulness and faithful accuracy, as well as sound judgment with relation to vital personal piety, of the friend who was present with them in their last illness. Often has she since talked to me about them, always adhering, in reply to my close questioning, to the same statement, notwithstanding my suggestion as to the improbability of their all uttering the same words. Yet, perhaps, it is not so unlikely as it might at first seem to be. These poor women frequently in conversation with her referred to the service at Mosley Street as the turning-point of their life; and it is by no means strange that in their last solemn and grateful review of the way by which the Lord had drawn them to Himself, they should once more recall the peculiar circumstances of that memorable Whitsuntide service—the gathered multitude of children, their thrilling voices sustained by the tones of a powerful organ; the appearance of the young preacher in the pulpit;

and, above all, the out-stretched hand, and the inviting voice so unexpectedly addressed to themselves personally by the preacher while, arresting the service on their account, he said, "Come in, my friends, come in."

Vividly are the circumstances of that Whitsuntide service present to the mind of the preacher still. More than fifty years with all their varied scenes and occurrences have not obliterated from his memory the incidents of that interesting occasion. Especially does he still seem to see in a pew near the pulpit his much-loved and honoured friend McAll, the minister of the chapel, with his little son and daughter sitting at his side with their father's arms around them, and his eye directed to the preacher with a look of kindly interest. Who that has read Dr. Wardlaw's *Memoir of Dr. McAll* has not been touched by the affecting recital of the decline and death of his beloved Eliza, and of the father's poignant, but humbly submissive sorrow, while he himself was rapidly following her to the grave, and to glory! The little boy Robert has for many years been doing that quiet but glorious work at Paris which has filled all the Churches with gladness and praise, and has doubtless often sent a thrill of joy through the ranks of the angels over sinners repenting and coming to Christ. How would his sainted father have delighted to witness it! But who shall say, *he is not acquainted with it*

now, and that it has not ministered to *his* joy, too?

The circumstances of that service were still further impressed on the preacher's memory by an additional incident connected with it—an instance of Divine grace more direct and immediate than was apparent in the cases of the three women. Among the assembled crowd was a young mother of one of the Sunday school children. She had come to the Chapel merely because her child was there. She was the wife of a pious and very sensible man, John Turner, who had lately been received into our Christian fellowship, and who died not long after, rejoicing in the Lord, and requesting me to preach his funeral sermon from the words, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." But she herself was thoughtless and unconcerned about her soul, and, indeed, did not like her husband's religious character. At this service, however, it pleased the Lord to open her heart, as He opened the heart of Lydia; and from that time she began to attend with deep concern to the things that belonged to her peace.

It is surely worthy of note that this service, which was designed especially for the children, should have thus been made a blessing to four *adults*, none of whom had come to hear the discourse, but only to see the sight. So it is we are

taught that on the smaller as well as the larger scale of the Divine operations in providence and grace, "His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor our ways His ways," and reminded that we are to "sow beside all waters," leaving it in prayer and faith to Him, in His own time and way, to add the blessing.

In conversation with her minister with a view to her joining the Church, she mentioned, with reference to the period and circumstances of her first awakening, that her mind was especially aroused and impressed by an anecdote related by the preacher of his mother's dying experience, and her giving, a short time before her departure, a Bible to each of her seven children, with a few appropriate words to each one severally.

As the writer of these narratives aims only at usefulness, and as the anecdote was useful to Mrs. Turner, it may not be unsuitable to give the details at greater length, as recorded by his father in his memoirs of his son John.

"In Mrs. Griffin's illness, especially for the last six weeks of her life, her mind was in a high degree placid and spiritual. It was pleasing and profitable to be with her. Before she was confined to her room, she said to the physician who attended her, 'I am anxious, Doctor, to know what you think of my state. If you think there is no human probability of my recovery, I shall be much obliged if you will tell me. It will

not shock me. The sting of death is taken away, and I can now say, I am not afraid to die. You have often seen me under distressing apprehensions of death ; but those fears are now gone, and I am willing to die. Pray, then, candidly tell me what you think.' The doctor, with great tenderness of tone and manner, said, ' My dear madam, it is hardly for us to say, when our hopes, as medical men, are passed, for we find that the common remark is very generally true, that while there is life, there is hope ; yet I must say that in your case we rather appear to lose ground than to gain it.' She replied, ' Thank you, my dear sir, that is enough ; I know what you mean. Thank you, for all your kind attentions to me.' This was between five or six weeks before she died. The same day she told the family what the doctor had said, and that it was the settled opinion of her mind that she would not live ; and she said to her husband, and to John, ' Now I must request you not to pray any more for my recovery—at least, not in my presence. Pray that I may have much of the Divine presence, and be meet for heaven ; but do not attract my attention to anything in this world.'

“ From this time till her death, her thoughts were wholly employed on spiritual and eternal subjects. Her conversation partook of a heavenly and highly useful character, and left a rich

savour of the religion of Christ on the minds of the friends who visited her. She was so filled with love to Christ, and compassion for souls, that she sent for several of her acquaintances, and after having informed them of the happy state of her own mind in the prospect of death, earnestly intreated them to be concerned for their eternal interest, and faithfully warned them of the danger of neglecting it. When she was extremely debilitated, considering herself to be very near the end of life, she wished her husband to procure her seven family Bibles, which was done just a fortnight before her death. She requested her seven children and their father to be present, when, sitting up in her bed, with the Bibles before her, she spoke much of the infinite value of the Word of God, and the Divine consolation which she had derived from it, and then presented a Bible to each child, with a short and appropriate address, beginning with John. The address to each is entered in the children's respective Bibles, as a memorial of their dying mother's love to the Word of God, and of her concern that they might all experience the power and blessedness of its sacred contents. When she presented the Bible to John, she said, 'My dear son, you know something of the truths contained in this book, and I hope you will still find them precious;' and soon after she said, 'I perceive it is the will of God that you should

be a minister. It has my most hearty concurrence. May you be able to preach a full and free salvation. Always remember that the salvation of Christ is a free salvation; but never forget that the freedom of the gospel is no freedom to sin." A consolatory address to her husband, as a father, and especially as a minister, too affectionate, too touching, too commendatory to be described, closed this very interesting and affecting family scene, deeply afflicting to all, but to none more so than to the tender and affectionate spirit of the firstborn. While all, however, were drenched in tears, she herself was tearless, and a soft and heavenly composure rested upon her countenance. 'I now know,' she said, 'what Dr. Watts says of the power of Christ, for I feel its truth with respect to my own mind.'

"Jesus can make a dying bed
 Feel soft as downy pillows are:
 While on his breast I lean my head,
 And breathe my life out sweetly there.

* * * *

"Then while you hear my heart-strings break,
 How sweet my minutes roll;
 A mortal paleness on my cheek,
 But glory in my soul."

Yes—glory in my soul.'

"She continued in this happy frame of spirit with complete self-possession, longing to be with Christ, without the least rambling of her intellect,

during the whole period of her illness. She derived great and continued support from that passage in Peter—"The word of the Lord endureth for ever." Her mind appears to have had a more than ordinary insight into the extent of its meaning. The immutability of the whole of God's truth; the certainty of its accomplishment; the immortality of the soul, as revealed and secured by the truth; the eternity of its purity and felicity, as promised by the word—were objects about which she continued to converse with her husband, family, and friends as long as she had strength to speak. The last words which she was heard to utter were, 'Underneath are the everlasting arms.'"

A lovely youth was John. He had been educated for the law, with the most pleasing professional prospects; but when Divine grace took decided possession of his heart, his desire for the sacred ministry became irrepressible, and having passed with high repute through a collegiate course of preparation for the work, he was ordained as pastor of a Congregational Church at Exeter, and bright, but brief, was his ministry there. In less than two years pulmonary disease brought his labours and his life to a close. He died in the family home at Portsea, in the presence of his father, of his beloved step-mother, and of all his weeping brothers and sisters. His father thus describes his last illness and death:

“The frame of his mind was always tranquil. He did not evince the great dejection of spirits and distressing soul-conflicts which he experienced when under the influence of the bilious fever at Exeter. Spirituality of devotion, resignation to the Divine will, a humble persuasion of his being happy after death, and gratitude to God and to all with whom he was connected, characterized the state of his mind during the whole of his illness. The comfort of his mind, and his scriptural assurance of a blissful immortality, greatly alleviated the affliction of his family, and rendered it profitable to listen to his fervent ejaculations and laconic but pious sentences. One morning he said, ‘Father, I do not like to speak of my own experience, but I must say that I have had a delightful night. I have had some sweet communion with God. I ought to tell of it, not to boast, but for His glory and the good of others.’ He spoke with lively sensibility of the union between the principle of love and genuine confidence, observing that ‘the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of God,’ when by His influence ‘perfect love casteth out fear.’ Though he was incapable of singing himself, he sometimes wished his brothers to sing in his presence. That fine hymn of Cowper’s—

‘God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform,’

was one in particular he delighted to hear, and also that evangelical hymn—

‘Not all the blood of beasts,’

but especially these verses of it—

‘My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

‘Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove ;
We bless the Lamb, with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding love.’

“About a fortnight before he died he was so much affected by palpitations of the heart and difficulty of breathing that he thought himself to be dying. He said, ‘Father, do you think I am going? If you do, pray tell me, for I should like to know; it would not shock me.’ He afterwards revived, and then said, ‘I really thought I was going. I have now, blessed be God, passed a point in my experience I had never attained before. I often felt pleasure in the anticipation of heaven, but have frequently feared that when I should arrive to such a state of body as to think myself to be really dying my confidence and comfort would decline; but now I have been, in my own view and feelings, within a few moments of eternity, and I feel truly happy. It was very solemn indeed; indeed, my dear father, it was very solemn, but I was very happy. I bless God for this. I take it as a pledge of what

His grace *can* do, and of what it *will* do when the last hour comes.'

“His heavenly Father was faithful to the pledge which He had thus given him. On Saturday, the 19th of January, 1822, about three in the afternoon, as he was sitting by the fireside, he was taken worse than before in consequence of the rupture of some blood vessel of the lungs, which, though the discharge was not profuse, taught him that his end was approaching. He said, ‘Now, father, I *shall* go: God bless you, and bless you all.’ He offered some lively short addresses to his heavenly Father, and said to those about him, ‘Pray that I may have a speedy release.’ The difficulty of breathing became very great, and consequently the difficulty of speaking was so; but perceiving his end very fast approaching, his father said, ‘I hope, my dear son, you are able to trust in your Heavenly Father.’ He said, ‘I am; He has been my trust from my youth. Through grace, I have a good hope—a full assurance.’ His father immediately said, ‘I trust the Lord Jesus will be with your spirit.’ He replied, with increased energy of expression, ‘He is; He is.’ These were the last words or syllables he uttered or attempted to utter; and in a few minutes afterwards his redeemed spirit left the suffering body for the realms of eternal light and glory, at about half-past eight on the Saturday evening. He breathed

his last sitting up in the bed, reclining on the bosom of his mother, and with his hand in the hand of his father, who closed the eyes of his beloved son by nature and grace, till the morning of the resurrection, when they shall be opened to see the King in his beauty. He was interred on the morning of Friday the 25th, attended by a great concourse of people.”

CHAPTER VII.

The pious poor—Relation of the ministry to the poor—Afternoon service at Rusholme Road Chapel—Elizabeth Taylor—Mrs. Turner—Chapel debt—Edward Wood—Hastings chapel debt—Meeting at Elizabeth Taylor's—Christian benevolence—Elizabeth Benson—Divine providence—Henry Taylor—The chimney-sweep—The album—Letter of Eliza Cave.

MRS. TURNER, having been awakened at the Whitsuntide service, and from that time beginning to attend regularly at the place of worship to which her husband belonged, soon found herself associated with other devout women of her own class in the Church, of which, after a while, she became a member, and who received her into their company with great delight, rejoicing to help her forward in her Christian course. The true privileges of Christian fellowship appear to be peculiarly realized by the pious poor. Unrestrained by conventional forms and feelings, their spiritual sympathies readily and strongly attach them to one another. Unity of sentiment and experience, as well as similarity

of condition, draws and binds them easily and naturally together; and having few things of an outward kind besides their daily work and wants and domestic cares to occupy their attention, religious concerns engage the spiritually minded among them with intense and almost uninterrupted interest. They love to worship together in the house of the Lord, to join one another at the prayer meetings, in the Sunday school, at the Church meetings, and at the Lord's table. And each one's home seems to belong to them all, so that it may almost be said that, like the first believers, "they have all things common." Oftentimes "they take sweet counsel together," as they sit by their firesides or "walk to the house of God in company," and such "counsel" is, doubtless, a source of much blessed refreshment and strength to their souls. They talk much together of their personal experiences, unbosoming their religious thoughts and feelings with a frequency and freedom but too little known, it is to be feared, by other classes of Christian professors. Many of them are well acquainted with the Scriptures, and have very just and enlightened views of Christian truth, though sometimes, it may be, they have better acquaintance with the spirit than with "the letter" of the word. Destitute of scholastic learning, they look, perhaps, the more simply for Divine teaching; and the Lord hath said, "The

meek He will guide in judgment, and the meek He will teach His way." And "Jesus rejoiced in spirit" when He said of such, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight!" Not seldom do these rich poor ones become valuable fellow-helpers with their pastors in the work of the Lord, and a great comfort to them, for among no other class do they find more loving and faithful friends. Happy is that minister who is surrounded by a goodly number of such, as almost every minister may be who loves them as he ought to do, and studies conscientiously and wisely in his public ministrations and otherwise to promote their spiritual interests. And, usually, he will reap a rich reward, both in their spiritual improvement and in their generous and really valuable services for the cause of Christ.

The relation of the ministry—the settled, pastoral ministry—to the poorer classes is a subject that demands very serious attention; for not only does the separation between the working and poorer classes generally and the upper and middle ranks of society seem to be growing wider and wider, but, what is far more ominous, the former classes are apparently drawing off more and more from the Church of God and from religious society and institutions. No doubt

many causes have long been co-operating to produce this effect, for which religious society is not responsible and which seem, indeed, to be unavoidable. But it may be important to ask, *Is there nothing in the prevailing style and character of the ministry*, and in the sentiments and habits of the cultured and well-conditioned religious classes, that may go in some measure to account for it? It is thankfully acknowledged that most admirable efforts are made to counteract the evil. But these efforts do not appear to include a regard to the mode and style of pulpit teaching and Church organization as much as is desirable. The opening of theatres and public halls and mission rooms, and other places, for Divine worship, and the multiplied evangelistic agencies so variously put in operation, deserve the highest possible commendation. They are all, no doubt, more or less divinely approved. God has "devised" *various* "means that His banished ones might not be expelled," and we should do the same. Jesus went *out* of the synagogues, as well as into them, "to seek and to save that which is lost," and we should follow His example. But He so went out that He might gather the wandering sheep into the fold, as well as to draw them to Himself as "the good Shepherd." And our object should be to gather them into the Churches, with a view to nourish and keep them there. Our Lord did

not institute two Churches—one for the rich and another for the poor, or one for the learned and another for the illiterate; nor intend that the one Church should be divided by class feeling and class arrangements into two parties. He designed to blend all classes and all hearts together in the happy fellowship of a holy brotherhood. And whatever in the aims and style of the ministry, in the cherished feelings of the members of the Churches, or in their practical regulations, is out of harmony with this grand and gracious design, cannot be supposed to have His approbation. That Divine Spirit who “worketh severally as He will” has, indeed, vouchsafed to His servants diversified “*gifts*” for diversified “*operations* ;” but that minister, we must suppose, will receive the peculiarly high approval of His Lord, who lovingly enters into the spirit of that admonition of James, “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” and who feels that, to whatever other class he has successfully ministered spiritual instruction, it is the crown of his honour and his joy to be able to say, as his Master said before him, “And the poor have the gospel preached to them.”

This, at least, was the ambition of the writer of these memorials. When he entered on his

work at Manchester there appeared little to gratify this desire of his heart, in connection with his congregation. It was small in numbers as yet, for it had been but recently established. At his first visit to them, in 1828, the Church consisted of only twenty-eight members, and at his settlement, in 1829, of only thirty-six. The congregation appeared to be composed of a few wealthy families and a few others well-to-do, though not wealthy, with only a very few persons besides of a poorer class. This was not an encouraging state of things; but a way was soon unexpectedly opened which led, under Divine blessing, to considerable improvement. There was no afternoon service, and the minister, feeling that he ought to be employed on that part of the day, thought he might possibly get a few domestic servants to attend a Bible Class in the vestry. He spoke to some of his friends on the subject, with a view to their mentioning it to their servants; and being encouraged to begin, he commenced the next Sabbath. Some dozen or more were as many as he could expect, as no public announcement had been in any way made. Great, therefore, was his surprise to find from fifty to sixty in and about the vestry. The next Sunday at least double that number were present, many of them servants from families residing in the neighbourhood, connected with other congregations. This compelled adjournment to the

chapel, and thus led to a regular service for the working people of the district, whom the first attendants were encouraged to invite. The minister requested that the ordinary worshippers at the chapel would not attend, fearing that the presence of the heads of families and of well-instructed Christians might interfere with that simplicity and freedom of matter and manner which he considered essential to the usefulness of the service. Its duration was limited strictly to an hour. The minister conducted the service, sitting in an arm-chair, except at prayer, which had been provided for the occasion by a valued friend. Some teacher from the Sunday school came up to lead the singing. For the subject of the sermon or address, which was delivered in a free and as much as possible colloquial style, Scripture narratives and parables or short and pointed texts were selected, with the design of bringing out prominently and almost constantly the elementary and leading truths of the gospel—the love of God to sinful men, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, the invitations and promises, as well as the solemn admonitions and warnings of the Word of God. This service was continued about seven years, until the minister's health beginning to fail, under the pressure of the three services on the Sabbath and two in the week, together with the demands

of an enlarging congregation and of calls to duty of various kinds elsewhere, he was compelled to discontinue it. A few lay helpers conducted it for a short time, but it was at length finally closed. Nor, indeed, was it longer equally needed, for the galleries had by that time become filled from end to end, both mornings and evenings, with a large proportion of the working class.

Among this class was a family who had been led to attend the afternoon service, by the name of Taylor. It consisted of three sisters and a brother, all of them very rough and uncouth in appearance and manners, but honest, upright, hard-working persons, and some of them in no common degree of shrewd and vigorous minds. The eldest was named Elizabeth, or, as she was usually called, Betsy, a woman of about middle age and a thoroughly original character. She was a sempstress, and so was the second, a widow, Mrs. Jones. This was the person who has so often been alluded to before as the friend of the *three women*. The third was also a widow; and the last was the brother, Henry, perhaps about thirty years old. He was subject to epileptic fits, and could only work at easy jobbing things. His looks and manner caused by the epilepsy gave him almost an idiotic appearance, and, indeed, excited fears of his becoming a confirmed imbecile. But the Lord had ordered it otherwise.

In due time Betsy, Mrs. Jones, and Henry became members of the Church. Mrs. Turner, as was before said, had also been received. I can seem to see now their attentive earnest faces as they sat together in the same pew in the front gallery. Whoever might be absent or whoever preached, unless illness prevented, they were always there. Sunday or week-days, at every meeting of every kind, they were always in their place. The chapel, the pastor, the Sunday school with its singularly gifted superintendents, the pious poor of their acquaintance, the works of faith and love busily going on in various ways—these seemed to be the only matters that interested them, but these interested them constantly and intensely. None could be more ardent lovers of Zion.

Calling one day at Betsy's cottage, and talking of our Heavenly Father's constant care of His children, she said, "I would not have a thousand pounds for all the world." "Why not, Elizabeth?" "Why, because I should never know where my mercies come from. You see, if I am laid up for a day or two, I soon lose my meal's meat for want of wages; so, as God keeps me in health to work, I see who it is that from day to day provides my food; but if I had always a deal of money in my hand, I should forget the Giver of all my mercies;" and then, after a pause, she added, "Oh yes, I think I should like to have it, for I know what I would do with it." "What

would you do with it, Elizabeth?" "Why, I would give it all to chapel debt." That I truly believe she would, as the sequel may show. Mrs. Turner and Betsy Taylor were great friends, and were accustomed to talk over all their concerns together. It happened that a rather heavy debt was remaining on the chapel. I had been from home some weeks to recruit my health. Mrs. Turner, who got a scanty livelihood by mangling, called one day on her friend, in low spirits. "Betsy," she said, "I have had something on my mind that I want to speak to you about. You see, minister has been away some time in bad health, but I have been thinking it is not so much his health, but that there is something weighing on his mind." "Do you, why what can it be? I have not heard of anything; and all things, as far as I know, are comfortable in the Church." "Why, you know, they say there is a great debt on the chapel, and perhaps it is a burden on Mr. Griffin's heart, and that makes him ill." "Indeed! I never thought of that," said her friend, "but what can such poor bodies as we do in it? I am told it is a great deal; how can we be of any use?" "I can't say," answered Mrs. Turner, sadly, "but I have been reading in the forty-first of Isaiah, where it says, 'They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage! So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth

with the hammer him that smote the anvil.” “You see,” said she, “they were working people, so I have been thinking that working folks like us ought to try and do something.” Mrs. Turner had thought that the passage referred to the building of the Temple, not having noticed the end of the verse. But it had suggested a principle, and she ran away at once with that to her friend Elizabeth. Betsy was silent a while, and Mrs. Turner, too, for both were downcast. At last, she looked up and replied, “I tell you what; you go home, and make it a matter of prayer for a week, I will do so too; and then we can meet after that, and talk over it again.” So they parted, and at the end of the week they returned to the subject. “I have been thinking what to do,” said Betsy. “I will put my name down for a shilling a week; Henry shall put his name down for a shilling a week; Mrs. Jones”—the widowed sister—“shall do the same. You put your name down for the same.” And then mentioning the names of others of their friends, of the same class, who were members of the Church, she added, “I am sure they will do so, too.” They accordingly set about it at once. But after a short time it reached the ears of the deacons, and one of them called on Elizabeth. “We understand, Betsy,” said the good deacon, “that you are trying to do something for the chapel debt. It is very good of you and your

friends, but surely you cannot know how large it is. We never heard of Mr. Griffin being anxious about it; you had better give it up, and at the proper time we will attend to it." Poor Betsy and her friends were woefully discouraged. It happened, however, that about this time she was engaged with some work in the house of a generous friend, Mr. Edward Wood, a member of the Church. Passing through the room where she was at work, he saw that she looked dejected, and seemed hardly inclined to speak. "Why, Betsy, you seem down in the mouth this morning; is anything the matter?" "Well, I suppose I must out with it;" and then, telling what she and Mrs. Turner and the friends were wishing to do, she added, "But deacons have throw'd cold water on it, and stopped it." "Why, Betsy, I didn't think you were such a chicken-hearted woman. Put my name down for £50, and go on." Looking up with amazement, she said, "But, do you mean it?" "Did you ever know me to say anything of the sort without meaning it?" "No, that I never did; then blessed be God," she cried, clapping her hands, while the tears streamed down her face, "the work is done!"

And done it soon was. Those two poor women brought into the deacons £750; for "their zeal had provoked very many," and all liked to give their contributions by the hands of these gene-

rous women. In a short time a list of subscriptions was sent to me at Clifton, by the deacons, amounting to more than £1100; and by-and-by, the whole debt of nearly £3000 was cleared off; and so the good women had a rich answer to their prayers, and a full reward of their self-denying love to the "house of their God."

But they had not yet done with their concern about chapel debts. Some four years after our retirement from Manchester, when we were settled at Hastings, we paid a visit to our old friends. Encouraged by their honoured pastor, Dr. Alexander Thompson, who is as kind-hearted and generous as he is intellectually accomplished,—besides a public tea-meeting of the congregation—arrangements were made for us to meet detachments of the people at their several homes. Elizabeth Taylor put in an early claim, which was heartily responded to. Sixteen of her friends met in her cottage. After a bountiful tea, followed by singing and prayer and some profitable conversation, at eight o'clock we were about to take our leave, in order to meet another party gathered for a similar purpose elsewhere, when Mr. Darling, the much beloved superintendent of the Sunday school, whose presence was generally considered indispensable on such occasions, rose and said, "Before you leave, sir, I have a commission to fulfil on behalf of these dear friends. They have under-

stood that there is a debt on your chapel at Hastings, and they wish me to put into your hands a small contribution toward its removal, as an expression of their love;" and to my surprise he handed me £12. I was deeply affected by their kindness, but considering that the money came out of their hard earnings, I was very reluctant to take it. "What," exclaimed Betsy, "not take it? You'll break our hearts if you say so. Why, what place on earth can be so dear to us, next to Rusholme Road, as the chapel where you preach at Hastings?" After we reached home, they sent £4 more. What minister's heart would not be touched by love like this? How truly may the words of Paul respecting the Churches of Macedonia be applied to these dear people, "Their joy and their deep poverty have abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves; praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

Surely, we have in the conduct of these persons a very noteworthy display of the spirit of primitive Christianity, in their zealous and self-denying love to the cause of Christ, to his servants, and to his people—making the word of God their rule, according to their knowledge

of it, and then agreeing together to make the subject of their solicitude a matter of prayer. If Jesus said of Mary, "She hath done what she could," and "This shall be told everywhere for a memorial of her;" and if Paul was eager to "bear record" of the liberality of the poor brethren of Macedonia, it cannot be wrong to treasure up memorials of such instances of practical piety as those we have here recorded.

But not of the liberality of the *poor* members only, of the Churches of Manchester, and of Rusholme Road among them, should honourable mention be made. The *rich* among them, too, have their "record on high." Long have they been famous among the Churches of this country for their munificent liberality. May it never decline, nor ever be forgotten! The congregation at Rusholme Road, advancing from small beginnings to its maturity, attained, by "the grace of God bestowed on it," to a high position among them, with regard to this as well as to some other characteristic qualities. Proofs of the genuine Christian principle which it is to be hoped usually actuated their benevolence, sometimes came out in a very interesting manner. At a time of serious and long-continued depression of the cotton trade, I chanced to meet, in the week preceding our collections for the London Missionary Society, to which we always looked forward with great interest, one of our members,

a manufacturer in a large way of business, Mr. James Thompson—the father of my much esteemed friend, Joseph Thompson, Esq., J.P.; and I said to him, “I fear our collections will fail on Sunday.” He quietly replied, “No, I trust not.” “I am glad to hear *you* say so, for I understand that in your special department of business, the depression is very sad.” “Yes,” he said, “it is indeed: we ourselves, instead of making profit, have been losing at a great rate for a long time past.” “Then, I suppose we must not expect *your* usual amount of contribution.” “Oh yes, it has long been a principle with me that if I should find it necessary to curtail my expenditure at all, it should be done only at the very last with reference to the cause of God.” The collections the next Sunday did *not* fail. The average amount about that period of nearly £500 from the Rusholme Road congregation and Sunday school, again cheered the hearts of the minister and deacons at the end of the day.

But it was not only in the collection boxes and the subscription lists that the fruits of their benevolence appeared. There were quiet ways in which they loved “to communicate, and do good.” I was preaching a course of sermons on the *Life of Peter. Dorcas* was the subject of one of them, the main topic of the discourse naturally being, benevolence to the poor, and the

various methods in which it may be exercised. No appeal was made, but the next day I received two letters, the one from a most excellent man, Mr. John Williams, a manufacturer, who afterwards became a deacon of the Church, enclosing £25; the other signed "Anonymous," and whose name I could never learn, enclosing £5; both stating that the subject of the previous morning's discourse had forcibly impressed their minds, and requesting their minister, that, as he was likely to know more of the poor than they did, he would distribute the amounts among them at his discretion. He kept an accurate account to a penny, of the occasions and circumstances of the distribution, urging Mr. Williams from time to time to look at it; but this he persisted in refusing to do, which I always thought was not an example to be followed, however agreeable was the proof of confidence in his minister. These little incidents are referred to, not as in any sense extraordinary, but as suggesting the importance of keeping the attention of the people habitually and seriously directed to Scriptural truths and facts, if we would have high and holy principles and motives of action predominant in their minds. Vague and indiscriminate talk about "beautiful and noble lives," apart from the exposition and inculcation of the peculiar principles and motives of Christianity, may do for novels, but should find no place in Christian

pulpits. It may serve to "build whited sepulchres," but it can have but poor effect in the formation of essential Christian character, or in nourishing Christian virtues to mature and vigorous fruitfulness. Artificial schemes and sensational efforts may sustain for a while a factitious animation, but galvanic action can never be a substitute for real vital energy. In the Scriptures the obligations resting on the followers of Christ to consecrate themselves, and whatever talents are intrusted to them, to the Master's service, are enforced by a great variety of arguments and motives. The leading ones are such as these: "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His." "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." "For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again." "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards His name in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." "Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.'" When the people are habitually under the influence of such solemn and weighty Scriptural teachings, they need but little exhortation to prompt them to deeds of liberality. Their benevolence will be spontaneous and unostentatious. Many a hidden stream will be flowing forth in various directions. Many a mite will be cast into the treasury of the Lord, seen by no other eye than His. Often will "the poor and needy" be made glad by the kindly hand of secret charity, moved by "the love of God shed abroad in the heart."

An instance or two may be given. The widow, Turner, who had been so concerned about the chapel debt, called on me one day, and said, "Sir, I should like to tell you of something that took place last Sunday, and to know what you think of it. I came to chapel without any breakfast, for there was nothing in the house,

and——” I immediately interrupted her, “What! Mrs. Turner, no food in the house! how could you be in that state? Why did you not let us, or some friend, know?” She replied, “I had had no mangling in the week, and I did not like to trouble any one with my wants—so I committed my case to my Heavenly Father, and came to chapel. But let me go on, sir: you preached, you know, from those words in Isaiah xxix. 19, ‘The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.’ While you were preaching, I quite forgot that I had had no breakfast, my soul was so lifted up; I felt no want of food, and the kind of faintness I had when I entered the chapel had entirely passed away. The Lord indeed ‘*increased my joy*’ at that time. But that was not all. As soon as the service was over, a man who had always sat in the next pew, but who had never spoken to me, and whose face I had never seen, put his hand over, and put something into my hand, and then got up at once and left without speaking, and I was astonished to find he had given me half-a-sovereign. I don’t know who he is, or where to find him; but what do you think of it, sir?” “What do I think of it, Mrs. Turner? why, of course, I think this, ‘When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear

them, I, the God of Jacob, will not forsake them.' Don't you remember how I was showing that the Lord is the God of *providence* as well as of *grace*, to the 'meek and the poor,' and that He often makes them unexpectedly 'rejoice in Him' in *both* respects? So, now He was giving you a proof of it." I need not say, the poor woman was never suffered to be in want of a breakfast again. The deacons took care of that, and thus "the God of Jacob" was showing that as she had cared for His House, He was caring for her wants.

Calling one day at the cottage of a poor widowed old man and his daughter, who were members of the Church, he said, "A strange thing happened the other day. Last week Elizabeth and I were both of us so poorly that we could not work, so nothing was coming in, and at the end of the week we had only three half-pence left. We were sitting on Saturday evening with the door open, for it was a fine evening, when something was thrown in and fell under my chair. I thought it was a stone thrown by the boys who were playing in the street: but presently I looked under the chair, and found it was something wrapped up in paper, and when I opened it there was half-a-crown. I at once went out to see if there was any one in the street, but there was no one but the boys: I can't understand it!" "Oh," I said, "the Lord, no doubt, put it into

the heart of some kind friend to think of you, and to take this way of supplying your wants, without your knowing from whom it came. And it is designed to teach you that 'the Father of mercies' has His eye upon you, and that His ear is open to your cry, and to give you assurance that He will never leave you nor forsake you."

The pious poor, generally, so far from desiring to be pensioners on the Church, or on public or private charity in any form, are very reluctant to let their wants be known. These are not the people, as a rule, who make large demands on the poor rates, and their *contentment* in their poverty is often very touching. A lady asked me to visit a poor man by the name of Benson, who was ill. The place was not easy to find: it was a cellar, a very dark one—so dark that at first, when I entered, I could see nothing. After a while, I perceived that there was a bed and a man lying on it, but I could see no one else in the miserable room. I talked with the poor man for a time, endeavouring to lead his mind to a knowledge of himself and of Christ, for he seemed very ignorant, and then knelt down and prayed with him. While in prayer, I heard a voice close by me seeming to respond with something like an "Amen" to the prayer; and when I rose up, I discovered by the light of a little fire an elderly woman standing near me. She immediately said, "Why, it is Mr. Griffin, isn't it?" "Yes, but

how do you know me?" "How do I know you? I know you well enough. Haven't I heard you preach there at Rusholme Road Sunday after Sunday! And ah, how often as the people were leaving the chapel, some of them in their carriages, have I said to myself, They are going home to what I have not got: my potatoes are on the hob, and that's all, but I thank God I can say I have got Christ as my Saviour, and I shall have heaven as my home, and that's all I want: I don't envy them their riches; perhaps I am happier than some of them." She said this in a tone of most evident sincerity. I was deeply interested in this discovery, and asked how it was she had not made herself known, for I had never heard of her. "Oh, I go up into the free seats in the gallery near the door, and slip out as soon as the service is over, for I am not in a dress fit to be seen, and nobody knows me; but the Lord knows me, and that is enough." Of course I soon became better acquainted with her, and brought her to the acquaintance of others besides, and, after a while, she was encouraged to unite with us at the Table of the Lord in fellowship with His people, to the great joy of her heart. She continued for some years growing in Christian knowledge and experience, and died rejoicing in Christ Jesus. I preached on the occasion, from those words of James which have been already quoted in these pages, "Hearken, my

beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" Many other instances might be given of Divine grace imparted to the poor, and which have often directed my thoughts and excited my feelings in the study and in the pulpit, with a view to their spiritual benefit, especially with regard to those of them who "were ignorant and out of the way." But these must suffice, with one exception.

It relates to Henry Taylor—the poor man who was once thought to be almost an idiot. I was calling one evening to see an invalid sister of his, a widow living with the others, and to reach her chamber I had to pass through a back room. There was a comfortable fire, with bright bars and a clean hearth, and before the fire-place was a well-scrubbed table, on which lay an open Bible and several tracts. On one side sat Henry Taylor, and on the other a man of some thirty years of age, named William Davies. He was a master chimney-sweeper. He had cleaned himself up and washed his face, and was decently dressed. When I entered he was looking with intense earnestness at Henry, who instantly said, "Oh, Mr. Griffin, I am so glad you have come in; will you speak to William? He thinks he is too big a sinner to be saved." "Well, what have you said to him, Henry?" "Why, I have been

telling him that salvation is offered to everybody, and I have been pointing out to him these passages, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever'—I told him to notice that it was 'whosoever'—'believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' 'He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' I have been showing him that God the Father laid our sins on Jesus, that He bore the punishment of them; that it was a finished work; and that we are pardoned, justified, and saved, only through faith, without our own merits or good works, but that it is all by God's free grace, and that therefore all are invited to come, just as they are, without trying to make themselves better. And I have told him of those invitations and promises, 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest'—and 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.' Yet still William seems as if he can't believe it for himself. Do speak to him, sir." I listened with deep interest to Henry's full and clear statement of these gospel truths, as applicable to the case of his friend,—he gave it indeed more fully than I have related; and it was touching to watch the countenance of the poor man as Henry proceeded, expressing,

as it did, the utmost eagerness, while his tears were making distinct traces on his dark though comparatively clean face. "Well, Henry," I said, "I can tell him no more than you have told him;" and turning to William, I said, "And is not this enough, my friend? You see from the Bible that it is not merely Henry who tells you all this. It is God who tells it in His Word. You believe God speaks the truth, don't you? you know He won't deceive you?" "Yes, sir; but then I am so bad, it seems as if it was hard to believe that such a sinner as I am can be saved." "Ah, so it seems to us all till we are brought simply to trust in the free mercy of God for our salvation: that is all that Henry, or I, or any one else can do." After a few more words we knelt down in prayer. The poor man rose with something like comfort and hope in his countenance. He and his friend Henry continued to spend their evenings together in reading and conversation, except when at the week evening services, from which they were never absent. William and his wife both joined the adult scholars in the Sunday school, and in due time became members of the Church; and have continued to walk in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, to the present day.

Henry himself was advancing in Christian knowledge and experience. He had a very considerable acquaintance with Divine truths, and

his spirit and conduct evinced their genuine influence on his mind. He and his sisters—Elizabeth Taylor and Mrs. Jones—possessed much native good sense; and it became increasingly evident that beneath a rough exterior their minds and hearts were being brought, in a very pleasing degree, under the refining influence of the gospel. It came into the minds of the good people who had met us at Elizabeth Taylor's to send us an album with their photographs and some others that they had collected. This they did, not from personal vanity, but from the warmth and simplicity of their affection, as is clearly evident from Henry's letter which accompanied it. In itself it is not without its interest, considering from whom it came. Some may despise it: *we* do not. The photographs—at least some of them—are not the most fascinating specimens of nature or of art; but they represent to us persons we have loved, so we preserve the plain little album as among the most precious of our treasures, reminding us, as it does, of some of the incidents that have been narrated in these pages, and of many persons and circumstances besides, very dear to our memory. Most of these people had been with us during the whole of our twenty-five years' ministry at Manchester; some of them have been spared during, also, the more than twenty-five years' ministry of my successor, Dr. Thompson. The very few who remain

must be near the end of their pilgrimage, and we trust all will meet in glory. The simple letters of Henry Taylor will finish these notices of the pious poor. They are here given exactly in his own words:—

“38, BOUNDARY STREET, EAST,

“CHORLTON-UPON-MEDLOCK, MANCHESTER,

“*June 12, 1864.*

“TO OUR LATE BELOVED PASTOR:

“Accept the present which we in the course of a few days shall send unto you, as a token of our Christian love and affection for you, which we, the undersigned, are sending you. And we wish at all times to be remembered by you at the Throne of Grace—as you are at all times by us—that the God of all grace may bless us all with His grace and Holy Spirit, to the enriching of our minds and enlarging of our hearts, and to keep us steadfast unto the end; and that we may know ourselves and our own weaknesses, and that our dependence is upon Him who is the support of all those who trust in Him; and that we may possess a well-grounded hope in His great salvation, by having the witness of the Spirit to bear witness with our spirit that we are His children, having passed from death unto life. And we pray that you may enjoy in your own mind, and at all times, the comforts and joy and peace and consolations which you so often held out to

us while you was with us. And at length may we, both pastors and people, meet around that Throne where parting shall be no more, where we shall meet, and casting our crowns at His feet we shall sing the new song unto Him who hath loved us, and washed us from all our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God for ever.

“Give our kind love unto Mrs. Griffin, and say that we was disappointed at not seeing her along with you this spring; but we hope she is well.

“I remain yours in Christian love,

“HENRY TAYLOR.”

In a postscript about the photographs he adds, “Mr. Hope says we must not pay the carriage upon it, and that it would be safer for you to pay it yourself, as then it would go safer; so we have enclosed along with this letter two shillings in postage stamps, which will be the same thing as if we paid the carriage in Manchester.” Good dear hearts of them!

Then in a second postscript—or rather second letter—after some further explanations, he writes—

“I am sorry to say that Mr. Darling is worse, and I hear there is little hopes of him; and Mrs. Waterhouse¹ is seriously ill; so in the midst of life we are in the midst of death. Therefore let

¹ Aunt of the distinguished architect, Alfred Waterhouse.

us be watchful, for we know not how soon the summons may come to us. But when it does come, may we be found clothed upon with His righteousness, and accepted through Him who is our only plea.

“ We have read the account of the opening of your chapel. We all rejoiced in your prosperity ; and may our God bless you and yours, and us and ours, and all His people everywhere, is the prayer of

“ Yours sincerely,

“ HENRY TAYLOR.”

The following extracts from a letter received since the above was written, from a dear and valued friend who was an infant when we settled at Rusholme Road, and by the goodness of God continues there still, will appropriately bring our notices of poor Henry to a close. The whole letter, a lengthy one, is so beautiful and touching in its various reminiscences and expressions of Christian feeling, that it will find a sure place in the pastor's cabinet of treasures. The “Rusholme Road” spirit comes out in every line. After many affectionate allusions to departed friends and fellow-worshippers, and to some still living, the writer says—

“ You would, doubtless, hear how gradually good old Henry Taylor has been declining—Henry to the very last;—how his blind nephew

carried him downstairs just as Mary Borrowdale entered the room; and as she assisted him to his chair his head fell back, and he passed away. But I must not weary you with all this—and not a word yet about the glorious Jubilee Meetings [of the Congregational Union] last week. Well, all about them you will read in the newspapers; only seeing dear Dr. Moffatt here has brought back the former meetings when he was present, and all Manchester was stirred with an enthusiastic welcome to the great African Missionary. I was a school-girl then, but well remember the excitement . . . I seem as though I could not stop; and yet I must say how increasingly dear our good minister [Dr. A. Thompson] is to his people. His sermons are so instructive and powerful, and his life so truly consistent. He seems to preach with increasing vigour and freshness rather than less, and age only mellows and deepens the utterances of thought and affection . . .

“With best wishes, much love, and earnest prayers for our heavenly Father to interpret into blessings for yourself and dear Mrs. Griffin,

“I remain affectionately yours,

“ELIZA CAVE.

“October 15, 1881.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. and Mrs. Burnett—Henry Burnett at Brighton—Letters of Mrs. Burnett—Letter of Mr. Burnett—Church meeting—“Service of Song”—Psalmody—“Old Hundredth”—Dr. Leifchild—Dr. Guthrie—Henry Rees—Character of Mrs. Burnett—Corniston Lake—Mrs. Burnett’s illness and death—Letter of Charles Dickens—Little Harry (Paul Dombey).

IN the early part of my ministry at Manchester, Mrs. Griffin observed two genteel-looking young people coming regularly for some Sundays to the same pew, as if they had taken sittings, and apparently listening with fixed and serious attention to the sermon. She mentioned them to me for the purpose of prompting me to inquire about them. I promised to do so the next Sabbath; on that evening, however, they followed me into the vestry, and introduced themselves, stating that they had lately come to settle in Manchester, and having accidentally entered our chapel, they had become interested in the services, and were now desirous of having an interview with me with reference to their religious concerns. They were at once invited to our house, and spent an evening with us in the course

of the week. We found them very interesting and intelligent persons, both the husband and the wife. They informed us that they were teachers of music and singing, that the husband, Mr. Burnett, had for some years been engaged as an opera singer, but that now he had abandoned the stage, and desired to spend his life in far other scenes and associations than those of the theatre. They appeared exceedingly frank and open in their general conversation, but it seemed evident that their minds were chiefly intent on spiritual things. They seemed eager to speak of the kind providence, as they considered it, that had led their steps to Rusholme Road Chapel, and of the impressions produced on their minds by their attendance there. So the conversation of the evening turned principally, and in a manner very touching to our hearts, on these important subjects.

In the course of conversation Mrs. Burnett intimated that she was the sister of Mr. Charles Dickens. We were, of course, not a little surprised and interested by this information: for Mr. Dickens was at that time in the height of his popularity, being received with *éclat* in the highest circles of society, and noticed by the Queen with marked distinction. The united facts of the husband having passed years of his life on the operatic stage, and the wife being a sister of the celebrated novelist, naturally

quicken'd our desire to know more of their former history, and especially of the steps by which Divine providence and grace had brought them into connection, and apparently cordial sympathy, with the people of God. A familiar friendship was soon established between us; and as the circumstances of their former life were gradually revealed, and their new religious life grew and developed rapidly, our interest in them, and that of many others, proportionally increased.

As Mr. Burnett is still living, a detailed record of his religious experience and character might not be seemly, but some notice of his early life may be interesting and suggestive. He was blessed with the instruction and influence of a pious grandmother and aunt, who inculcated on him the duty and importance of daily reading the Bible, for which he always expressed in later life his deep gratitude to God. When he was a mere child he was sent to live for a while with his grandmother at Gosport, who was connected with the Church under the venerable Dr. Bogue—his father, at the time, living at Brighton. That remarkable man, Richard Knill, was then a student at Gosport, lodging at the house of Henry's grandmother. Little Henry was not overlooked by the loving-hearted and fervid missionary. When about to leave for India—he went afterwards to Russia—he said to the little boy, "Now, Henry, I am going away, and may

never see you again; I want you to make me one promise, and that is, that you will pray for me every day as long as you live, if I am alive." Mr. Burnett told me this many years after, and I naturally enough said, 'That was a promise you would not be likely to keep.' "Yes," he replied, "I have never broken it." "What," I said, "did you keep up the habit of prayer all through your *stage* life—and always pray for Mr. Knill?" "Yes, I never omitted it for a single day. Once or twice, I was so tired after being late at the theatre, that I thought I might say my prayers in bed; but my conscience would not let me rest, so I got out to kneel down at the bedside." It seemed wonderful to me: but my thorough conviction of the integrity of my friend, founded on intimate acquaintance with him, forbad my doubting for a moment the truth of his statement.

After some time he returned to his father at Brighton. The organist of the Chapel Royal in that town was a friend of his father's—the organist was attending on some occasion the chapel where Henry's father worshipped, and Henry was sitting by his side. After the service he said to the father, "That boy of yours has a remarkable voice; he ought to learn music. If you will place him under my care, I will teach him. Music and singing should be his profession." The father, fearing it might be a snare to his

boy, for some time objected; but at length yielding to the advice of his friend, Henry was placed under his instruction. The boy's musical talent rapidly developed under the guidance of his able and sympathetic teacher, who took great delight in his young pupil's precocious powers of voice. He became noticed in the musical parties in Brighton as a distinguished young singer, and at about ten years of age, he was introduced, under the patronage of his friend the organist, to the Pavilion, and he remembers well standing on a table in the drawing-room at the Pavilion to sing a "solo" before the Court, and seeing old George IV., who was suffering with gout, wheeled into the room, covered with flannels and bandages from head to foot. At the recommendation of his teacher he subsequently became a pupil at the Royal Academy of Music. There he met Miss Fanny Dickens, who was also a pupil at the same Institution, and who afterwards became his wife. On quitting the Academy he soon became known among the musical circles connected with the London theatres, and easily met with engagements at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Braham, the great tenor singer, used to say, "If I can't come, send for Burnett; he will do as well." But with all the applause that greeted him, and all the exhilaration which the splendid assemblages and exciting scenes of the great London theatres would naturally

produce in a youthful mind, he was gradually coming to feel the emptiness of worldly pleasure, and to yearn in his "secret heart" after more substantial satisfaction. The remembrances and impressions of his childhood had never left him. They hovered over his spirit and held it as by the power of a charm that no worldly associations, no carnal delights, could effectually dispel. The last year of his theatrical life, engagements were offered him at Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Edinburgh, Dublin, and Bath. He chose Bath, in order that he might have the opportunity of attending the ministry of Mr. Jay,—a sure proof of the bias of his heart towards the things of God; for though he always maintained that he was not truly a converted man—at least, in his own view, until his settlement at Manchester, it is evident that the Lord was gradually drawing him to Himself. At Bath he took lodgings, and was not a little pleased to find that the people of the house were connected with Mr. Jay's congregation, and that they were truly pious persons, so that it was his happiness to join them, as opportunity offered, in family worship. But he never expressed his views or feelings to them, and was unknown to Mr. Jay. His desire to relinquish the stage continually increased, but how to do so prudently was not yet clear; so he hesitated a while. He was now married, and London life became more and more irksome to him. On

Sundays his wife and himself were engaged as professional singers at the Chapel of the Sardinian Ambassador, and the evenings of the Sunday were usually spent at the house of Mr. Dickens, in a manner which, though strictly moral, was not congenial with his feelings. At length, all this practical contradiction to what he felt to be right became intolerable ; and the resolution was taken to leave London and quit the stage. It was by the advice of Mr. Charles Hullah that they decided on coming to Manchester as a place in which, in his opinion, a highly appreciative musical taste existed, and in which they would be sure to find wide and suitable scope for the practice of their profession as teachers of music and singing. Mr. Hullah had rightly judged ; and they soon found that the name of Mr. Dickens and their own talents had secured for them as many engagements for teaching as they could conveniently meet.

It was about three or four weeks after their settling in Manchester that, in passing up Rusholme Road on a Sabbath evening, they observed the lights from our chapel and the people going into it. They entered the place, and were accommodated with seats. At the close of the service, Mrs. Burnett turned to her husband and said, "Henry, do let us come here again : if you will come, I will always come with you." He was much surprised, for she had never

shown any particular interest in Divine worship before; and not a little delighted, as he himself had felt the same interest in the service as she expressed, and the same earnest wish to come again. What it was that so interested both of them at the same time on this the first occasion of their attending the chapel may be worthy of reflection. There certainly was nothing of the æsthetic to attract them, either in the style of the building or in the character of the service—the former, respectable and commodious, but by no means ornate; the latter, earnest and animated, but in all its parts simple and serious. In the singing there was nothing to gratify a cultivated musical taste. There was no organ or any other instrument. A choir, so-called, led the singing with fair ability, but certainly not with marked attractiveness; and the people joined in it with devotional heartiness, and that is all that can be said. And as to the sermon, it is rather remarkable, they never seemed to recollect even what it was about, for I do not think they ever mentioned it afterwards, and certainly I never asked them. They seem to have been so much absorbed in reflecting on their own state and character as to have lost sight of the special truths that had excited that reflection. “More or less all through the service,” said Mrs. Burnett, “I seemed in a state of mind altogether new to me; and during the sermon it was as if I were entering a new world.”

So the effect of this service on their minds is to be wholly attributed to the secret influence of the regenerating Spirit of God ; and this case strikingly seems to illustrate the words of Jesus : “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

Their minds appeared to open with remarkable facility to the truth, and the Word of God and the house of God became the joy of their hearts ; and never did quickened and happy souls more thoroughly “call the Sabbath a delight.” When they had been with us several months, they expressed an earnest desire to commune with the people of God at the Lord’s Supper and in Church fellowship. We had many conversations respecting the design of the Lord’s Supper and the nature, privileges, and responsibilities of Church communion. They entered into these subjects with the utmost interest and earnestness, having been accustomed from the first to remain as spectators and listeners while the members of the Church were partaking of the emblems of the body and blood of the Lord, and the pastor was addressing exhortations to the communicants appropriate to the occasion. His discourses in the general service immediately preceding the Lord’s Supper usually brought before the minds of the people, in a specially expository way, the

Person, character, and substitutionary sacrifice of “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.” Subjects of this nature peculiarly engaged the minds of our friends Mr. and Mrs. Burnett, and their profiting was rapid and marked, as the sequel will show.

From that sequel it will be perceived, however, that the process of preparation, so to call it, for joining the Church was slow and protracted,—much more protracted than would, perhaps, be generally approved by ministers and leaders of Churches in the present day. Such a process, it is true, might not seem to have been absolutely needed with regard to Mr. and Mrs. Burnett. Yet they had somewhat suddenly come under powerful religious impressions, and their interest in Divine things was intense and eager; but it was probable that they would still be exposed to strong worldly influences which it might require no common degree of Christian principle to withstand. Their minister, therefore, thought it desirable that they should have time to “*exercise themselves unto godliness,*”—opportunity for self-examination and self-testing,—as well as for acquiring deeper acquaintance with Divine truth, before making such an open profession of discipleship to Christ as Church fellowship implies. It was his habit, indeed, to treat Church membership as a matter of the most sacred importance and responsibility, and he was willing to err

rather on the side of caution and deliberation than on that of inconsiderate haste. Serious and anxious inquirers will neither be kept out of "the kingdom," nor be deterred from seeking to enter it by a process of self-trial, so long as they are being encouraged and drawn on by the loving sympathy of the pastor and other Christian friends. On the other hand, those who may be too ready to say "Peace, peace," to themselves may be confirmed in fatal delusion by hasty and almost thoughtless profession. Our Lord would seem to have been specially solemn and earnest in his language when warning his hearers against insincere or inconsiderate profession of discipleship. Hard and fast rules are, of course, not to be laid down for universal and indiscriminate application ; but in times wherein there may be a prevalent tendency to laxity, both of doctrine and discipline,—a tendency to conformity to the sentiments, spirit, and habits of the world,—in fact, to a very easy-going religious profession, on the part of nominal Christians—in such times, the matter of Church membership becomes a very serious one indeed. The foundations of Church organization and fellowship, and, equally, the foundations of personal Christian life, should be laid with the utmost care and conscientiousness. In respect either to doctrines or persons, if "wood, hay, and stubble" be mixed with the "gold, silver, and precious stones" in the building of God's

Church, the consequences may be very sad even during the process of building, and in the end the "work may be burned." The notion that the responsibility as to soundness of Christian profession and fitness for Church membership lies solely with the candidates themselves, is surely not a Scriptural notion. It is the pastors and the Churches who are severely rebuked by the Lord for having among them false professors. The leaders of the Churches and the Churches themselves are made solemnly responsible, not for searching the hearts of others—a thing they cannot do,—but for doing all that in them lies to secure and preserve the purity and spirituality of the Church, which is the body of Christ, and the temple of God.

In common with young ministers generally, I was, of course, desirous of numerous additions to the roll of Church members; but I was aware of the serious injury that might be done to souls and to the character of the Church by hasty and incautious admissions, and was anxious to avoid it. The sentiments and feelings of our new friends with relation to their personal state and character, and the public avowal of their Christian discipleship, were elicited by conversation and correspondence. Not long after our first interview, I received the following letter from Mrs. Burnett:—

“ October 3rd.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Feeling great anxiety as to the state of my soul, and having been led by the blessing of God to sit under your ministry, I am induced to give you a faithful statement of my feelings and views. I was brought up in the Established Church, but I regret to say, without any serious ideas of religion. I attended Divine worship as a duty, not as a high privilege, and the discourses I heard made no impression on my mind. I repeated prayer with my lips, but not from my heart. I was thrown very much into society, and seemed to live as if this world were to be my home for ever, entirely forgetting that I was merely a pilgrim wending my way to eternity. I seldom read the word of God, and when I did so, rather as a task than otherwise. I seemed gradually to lose my relish for the pleasures of the world, but I was still wholly ignorant of gospel truths.

“ A twelvemonth since, circumstances induced us to leave London, and settle in Manchester; having taken up our abode near the sanctuary in which by the grace of God I have been brought to a sense of my sinfulness, we happened accidentally to go into it. I do not recollect your discourse, but I felt at the time very much interested, and anxious to hear again. By degrees, my eyes were opened, and I saw with

shame and confusion my utter worthlessness in the sight of God, and that unless I came to Him through His dear Son, I could not be saved. I had recourse to prayer: I prayed that I might be enabled to make myself acquainted with the character of the Lord Jesus, His dignity, His power, the immensity of His love for us sinful creatures in dying for us on the cross. I prayed for faith in Him; I prayed also, that I might not be conformed to this world, but that I might be transformed by the renewing of my mind, that 'I might prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' I trust (I say it with all humility and with sincere and heartfelt gratitude to Him who has been graciously pleased to illumine me with His Holy Spirit) that my prayers have been heard. I seem to have clearer views. I delight in the ordinances of the sanctuary. I feel great pleasure in mixing with God's people. I feel anxious to be spiritually-minded and to devote myself entirely to the service of Christ. I feel that I must pray earnestly and constantly that my gracious Father will give me grace to withstand the temptations by which I may be surrounded in that intercourse with the world which my situation in life will compel me to hold.

"I am, dear sir,

"Yours very gratefully,

"FANNY BURNETT."

In another letter, some weeks after, she writes—

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Having had several delightful conversations with you on a subject of deep interest to my mind, that of joining with God’s people in Church fellowship, and fearing that in those conversations I have not expressed all I feel on this most serious and important duty, I am induced to endeavour to explain more fully the state of my feelings.

“I trust that a spiritual change has been wrought on my heart, but I feel humbled and abased that I should not long ere this have gone to Christ confessing my sins, and earnestly praying Him to wash me in His blood, and to wash out my transgressions. I cannot tell you the sensations I feel when I think of the mercy of God in throwing this glimmer of light on my darkened soul. My heart seems to bound with gratitude to Him. I see my own depravity and worthlessness. I feel the necessity of a Saviour, and am fully persuaded that Jesus Christ is in every way the Saviour I require. Sometimes I have doubts and fears, but I am encouraged in His blessed Word to rely on His gracious promises, and to believe that He is able and willing to forgive me my sins though they be as scarlet. I feel so differently in regard to spiritual matters generally that I am induced to hope that my stony heart

is softened. I so much oftener intermingle religion with my secular duties. When alone, I feel heartfelt pleasure in meditating on the lovely character of Christ, His purity, His meekness, His amazing love to us sinful creatures, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection.

“ While reading His holy Word, I seem to hear Him speaking to me individually. I am exceedingly anxious to unite in Church fellowship, considering it a high privilege, and my bounden duty to consecrate myself to Christ. I have attended as a spectator when the ordinance has been administered in your chapel, and have felt deeply impressed with a sense of love and gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ, for having instituted a means by which we are constantly reminded of His death and resurrection, and of the fellowship which exists between Christ the Head of the Church and its members. I trust I may, by the grace of God, be enabled to walk through the remainder of my life in the fear of the Lord. I know that in my position in life, I shall be exposed to many temptations; but I trust by constant watching and prayerfulness I may be able to stand and not fall.

“ Since I have been brought by the kind providence of God, through your instrumentality, to reflect seriously on my sinfulness, I have been led to feel my own weakness; and whenever I have been unavoidably led into such society, or

placed in such a position as was likely to distract my mind, and to make me for a time to forget God, I have had recourse to prayer, and have prayed that God would not leave me for an instant, but that He would be my stronghold and shield in all temptations.

“ I am, dear sir, yours very gratefully,

“ FANNY BURNETT.”

When on one occasion, Mrs. Burnett was calling on me, according to previous arrangement, for conversation, Mr. Burnett sat down to write to me.

“ *September 27th.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ My dear wife has left home for the purpose of calling on you respecting her eternal welfare. I take shame to myself that she should have outstepped me—feeling, as I do, the many more advantages I have had ; and yet I thank God she is not behind me, more especially as we have children whose young minds are generally more under the guidance of mother than father ; and I know from experience the advantage of early and judicious training. It was my lot in my younger days—and I thank God that it was so, and honour the memory of those to whom I am so indebted—to have nearly the whole time of two pious individuals, my father’s mother and sister, devoted to my religious instruction. And

though they have gone to their rewards many years, I think I hear them still saying, "My dear boy, never let one day pass without learning some portion of the Word of God; you will soon find how your knowledge will accumulate." Nor do I remember, up to the time of quitting their roof for my father's, when seven years old, sleeping a night without having committed to memory some portion of God's Word. And as in after life I was thrown into the very sunshine of worldly pleasure, but for these early impressions, which are generally lasting, God only knows what I should be at this moment. He who has been taught the Scriptures, and has had a reverence for all good people instilled into his young mind—although the allurements of the wicked may entice him into folly, or hurry him into forbidden ground, without allowing him time for reflection—still, when he sits down and thinks of the kind hearts devoted to his well-doing, through years gone by, however he may strive to stifle conscience, he will surely find the attempt to be in vain: one who has been taught well cannot commit sin without severe compunction. Oh, I always pray that my dear ones may have an example worthy of imitation from their parents, and I cannot thank God sufficiently for having impressed my dear wife with the necessity of religion.

"But I have said nothing yet that I sat down

for the purpose of writing. I am acquainted with the motives of Mrs. Burnett's visit to you, and should blush if, with all her disadvantages, she should *first* decide openly for God. I should like to walk hand in hand with her. Do not think, my dear sir, that my wish to join the Church is the thought of a moment, or from the excitement of a sermon or two. I have thought of it long, and well; but finding my thoughts sometimes wandering for an instant during a solemn prayer, I have kept myself back as unfit to join God's people at the altar. It is through a wonderful providence myself and wife were brought to Manchester, and placed under such a director, and that through the Christian discourses of the son of one whose name, with that of Bogue, is never mentioned without reverence, I should, with my wife, be brought to see the danger of sin and of procrastination.

"I have troubled you with much, and yet I appear to have said nothing; but, with your permission, I shall call to-morrow.

"I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"HENRY BURNETT."

At Rusholme Road Chapel the Church meetings for the reception of members were regarded as among the most delightful and edifying of all our gatherings. Interesting and profitable recitals of the leadings of Divine providence, and

the influence of Divine grace in individual Christian experience were often brought out. Christian sympathy with the brotherhood was intensified. Elder and younger believers often felt their spiritual comfort and strength renewed. The deacons, the Sunday school teachers, and other workers in the vineyard, found fresh stimulus to their gratitude, faith and zeal, as the letters of the candidates were read by the pastor, and the brethren gave their testimony respecting them; and not least of all did the pastor himself feel his "joy in the Lord increased," and that joy to be his strength. Often was it felt that such occasions had proved a sweet preparation for the communion of the brethren at the Table of their Lord on the holy day of rest immediately following.

The evening on which Mr. and Mrs. Burnett were received was one of peculiar interest to the Church. They had greatly endeared themselves to the hearts of the good people. All had learned to love them; and as they came into the assembly, with several others, to receive the testimony of their welcome to the fellowship of the Church, many and many a tear of loving gratitude and sympathy fell from the eyes of their brethren and sisters in Christ of every class, in response to their own very evident emotions; and many a glance and many a smile of affection and gladness seemed to hail their union with the

family of God. So, when Christiana and her family were received at the house of the "Interpreter," "one smiled, and another smiled, and they all smiled for joy that Christiana was become a pilgrim."

Having thus "joined themselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten," with their faces steadfastly set Zionwards, these dear friends began to consider what they could render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards them, and with what they might be able to serve Him. And having humbly asked Him, "What wouldst Thou have us to do?" they were led to think that possibly they might aid His worship in the consecration of their musical talents in the public "service of song." And reflecting on the past, they began to think that perhaps the Lord had been specially preparing them, by the leadings of His providence, to "show forth His praise" in this ministry of worship. So they agreed to consult their pastor about it. "Well, but have you counted the probable cost?" he asked. "How will it sound in your musical coteries that Mr. and Mrs. Burnett are leaders in a Dissenting 'singing seat'?" "Yes, we have thought of all that," they replied, "and have made up our minds to offer our services to the congregation, if they will accept of us, and you approve of it." Gratefully glad were we all at the proposal. The offer was generous, for

overtures had been made to them with a view to their conducting choirs at Episcopalian and other Churches, with valuable pecuniary considerations, but they steadily declined them all. "It was at Rusholme Road Chapel," they said, "that the Lord met us in His mercy, and *there* we wish to devote ourselves to Him in aid of His worship, if He shall be pleased to permit us." Arrangements were left to their suggestion. They selected some six or eight persons with capable voices to join them. Their good sense and deep piety disposed them to consult the general requirements of public worship, and even popular feeling, rather than their own scientific tastes. No whims were indulged; no startling novelties were introduced, interfering with the habits and forms of ordinary congregational service. Whether solemn or animated, pathetic or jubilant, melodious or grand, deep feeling and impressiveness pervaded the whole. There was no instrumentation of any kind; but so harmonious were the voices, and given out with such strong and firm precision, that none could be required. It was this *spiritual feeling*, adapting itself to the varieties of Christian sentiment and emotion as expressed in the hymn, that imparted to the psalmody its peculiar charm, and rendered it so helpful to the devotions of the people. It was felt that the choir were *worshippers*, and the people worshipped with them. All, even those

who were the least susceptible, either of musical or of religious sensibility, felt, more or less, its inspiring power.

Mrs. Burnett's voice was one of great power and brilliancy. Mr. Burnett's, likewise, was a voice of much compass and volume when exerted in its strength, and with more flexibility, capable of more variety and richness of modulation, than hers; blended in unison, whether in duet or in chorus, the effect was most charming. But in public worship it was the devotional influence which it seemed to carry along with it that rendered it so peculiarly delightful to us all; for it was truly a "service of song unto the Lord."

At the first week-evening rehearsal the Old Hundredth was sung at our request, and we have not forgotten the impression that grand old tune produced on us, sung, as it then was, with the firmness and precision of a military march, all the parts combining in clear and strong expression, and yet flowing on in the tones of a full and well-sustained harmony. The grandeur of which that tune is susceptible seems, generally speaking, to be very little appreciated. Sung *with deliberate force* to Watts's first version of the Hundredth Psalm, its solemn dignity is exceedingly impressive; and still more when sung in more subdued tones and to slower time—as regards, at least, the first two verses—to his second version of it,—

"Before Jehovah's awful throne
 Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
 Know that the Lord is God alone,
 He can create, and He destroy."

Many years ago I heard this really noble tune sung by a powerful and effective choir, together with a large congregation, at a service preceding the Lord's Supper, to that affecting hymn—

"When I survey the wondrous cross."

It was sung to the slowest possible time, and in the most subdued tones conceivable consistent with distinct articulation, and with a pathos that produced a sort of *tremulous sensibility* throughout the large assembly, as if you could hardly draw your breath. I believe many wept—I did so myself—especially when in faintest tones, but in which every cadence and every word were distinctly audible, and in which the whole congregation as faintly joined, those most pathetic lines were sung—

"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
 Sorrow and love flow mingling down!
 Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
 Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

Of course, one does not mean that all tunes should be sung to slow measure,—not even the Old Hundredth always; but whether *solemnity, sweetness, and pathos* might not with advantage be cultivated more than they seem to be, and that rapid, curt, and inexpressive style which has

become so prevalent, and which is so destructive of devotional effect, be got rid of, or, at least, modified, may be a question not unworthy of consideration.

I remember something of the same subduing effect being produced on my mind by hearing for the first time that sweet tune, the “Italian Hymn,” most sweetly sung at Queen’s Square Chapel, Brighton, when Dr. Leifchild was ministering there. He gathered round him a few delightful voices to lead the choir, and we had the opportunity of hearing them at his own house as well as in public worship. They sang it with striking appropriateness, and with touching expression, to the hymn—

“Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All I’ve left to follow Thee;”

and since that time I have never liked to hear it to any other.

In connection with sacred “service of song,” there are some scenes associated with domestic worship on which memory so much delights to linger, that though a reference to them be a digression, I would like to allude to them in the general course of narrative rather than in the form of lengthy notes.

One of these occurred in relation to the family of that noble man, Dr. Guthrie, as they gathered round his death-bed at Hastings. It was our high privilege to be with him nearly every day

of the last three weeks of his life. Late on a Saturday evening I received a note from my friend, Mr. Percival Bunting, of London, to say that Dr. Guthrie and his family had gone to Hastings, and that he hoped I would endeavour to see him. I was not slow to take the kind hint. I could not get to him on the Sunday, but the next morning, as I was leaving the house to visit him, his son, Mr. Charles, of the Chancery Bar, met me with a request from his father to see me. For years I had wished to see him; once we went to his church, Free St. John's, at Edinburgh, but he was from home. He was now suffering severely, as he had been for years more or less, from disease of the heart, but he was able to converse pretty freely. He received me as if he had always known me, with all the geniality and open-heartedness so characteristic of him: you were at home with him at once. He was wheeled out most days in a Bath chair, and once drove up to our house with Mrs. Guthrie and some other members of his family, but he could not alight from the carriage. Looking round on the picturesque scenery amidst which our house is situated, he said, "Nature and art have combined to do much for you here." Many a talk we—for he would have my wife there—had with him on "Disruption" matters. Speaking of his efforts throughout Scotland on the "manse" business, I said, "You collected, I

think, £100,000?" "Ay," said he, his eyes glistening with joy, "£116,000 for the good men's homes." After a fortnight we found he had been suddenly taken worse, and we were with him from that time daily. The interviews were scarcely more than for a few minutes' prayer at his request, during which he would throw his brawny arm over my shoulder as I knelt at the bedside, and at every sentence ejaculate, "Amen, amen," or, "Ah, that's it;" and then when it was finished, "Well, that will do now, but come again tomorrow." When I asked him one day if his mind was at peace, he replied, "Ay, that's just it; yes, *peace*, but no raptures, no, no raptures, but peace; and that is what she will have," pointing to Mrs. Guthrie, who sat by the bedside, "and what they will have," pointing to his family; "the atonement, the atonement, that is sufficient."

It was during these last days that his daughter, Mrs. Welch, and his sons, who were present, used to sing around his bed, as is recorded in his *Memoirs*. The most beautiful hymns were selected from the Scottish Collection appropriate to his state. Nothing could be more touching. The tunes were of the sweetest, and sung in extremely subdued and tender tones, for they all sang their parts with chastened taste. It seemed to soothe the spirit of the dying saint, and to raise it in holy meditation, as the minstrel

harps of the ancient prophets may be supposed to have prepared them for their divinest inspirations. Dr. Guthrie died on the Sabbath; I was not there at the time. On the Monday when I called, the body was already laid in the coffin, and all the family had left except his son Charles, who was to accompany it to Edinburgh. As I entered the men were just putting on the lid; it was removed for me to lay my hand on his face, still noble and beautifully placid, and as I withdrew it the cover was fastened down.

The other instance of domestic sacred song was associated with the endeared family of our truly "honourable friend," Mr. Richard Davies, M.P. for Anglesey, the son-in-law of that lovely man, and as Dr. Edwards, the President of the Presbyterian College, Bala, assured me, the greatest of modern Welsh preachers, Henry Rees. Dr. Edwards, whose mind was of a highly cultured order, stated that in his opinion Mr. Rees's sermons would bear comparison with Robert Hall's. One of his discourses we had the privilege of hearing, and with a sympathy excited by his voice and manner that made us almost fancy we understood Welsh, while our friends who sat near us whisperingly rendered into English his clear and pungent thoughts, sentence by sentence. Our sympathy, too, was sustained by the absorbed attention with which

the crowded audience hung upon his words, and especially towards the close, as his fervour seemed to increase, and his voice acquired those chanting-like, or rather wailing and most penetrating tones, as if with reiterated and importunate appeal, so well described by Paxton Hood, during which the people appeared to be bowed in deep sensibility, or kindling into ecstasy, as the tears continually started from their eyes, while some of them gave utterance to their emotions in those suppressed exclamations peculiar to the Welsh. Yet, for the most part, the preacher was quiet in his manner; there was no gesticulation, no apparent effort to excite the feelings of the people; all was seriously dignified, but evidently effective in the highest degree. The singing was uncommonly impressive. What has been often said we found to be true, that those who have not heard Welsh singing in public worship cannot imagine its effect. The text of the discourse was from Hosea, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help." The whole was translated to us *viva voce* by Mr. Gee, a medical gentleman of Liverpool, in conjunction with the gifted daughter of Mr. Rees, the wife of Mr. Davies, and a nobly impressive discourse it was.

It was in their beautiful place in Carnarvonshire on the banks of the Menai Strait, close to

those stupendous structures, the "Suspension" and "Britannia" bridges, that we were privileged to enjoy those delightful seasons of domestic worship to which I have referred, as year after year we mingled with their happy and intelligent family circle, in company with their beloved grandfather and grandmother, Mr. and Mrs. Rees, together with their numerous friends who were always dropping in every hour of the day. At morning worship, at which the large family and all the servants assembled at eight o'clock, a hymn was always sung. The hymns were English, and the tunes also—we should have preferred Welsh, if we had been able to join in them; but it was very delightful, for all were singers, and all took their parts harmoniously, as the Welsh generally do, led by the cultivated taste and effective voice of the mother of the family. The hymns selected and the style of music were appropriate to the occasion, and whether animated—as they usually were for morning praise—or more pathetic, all was impressive, leaving on the mind a more or less devotional feeling all the day long. In the evenings we were entertained with genuine Welsh music, closing, as the time of family worship drew near, with some sweet hymn. "Rock of ages" was often chosen, and sung to the well-known tune of "Wells." I regretted that I could never induce Mr. Rees to offer prayer, for he was as modest as a child; but

when a hymn was sung to one of the Welsh tunes, it was pleasant to watch the good man's countenance, for it was evident that he was singing with rapt devotion deep down in the dear Welsh heart of him.

He lies buried in a singularly romantic little cemetery right opposite to Mr. Davies' estate, and whose walls are washed by the waves of the Menai Strait, as they flow around its tiny islets and over its rocky bed.

It is said that if on the day of his interment the weather had been favourable, half of the population of North Wales would have been there.

Returning from these episodes to Mrs. Burnett, it is of her that we now have to speak almost exclusively. Feeling that she had scriptural reasons to believe that a saving change had been wrought on her soul by the Spirit of God,—that she had been accepted and justified freely by His grace, through faith in the Saviour's mediation, she was now relieved in a good degree from that weight of anxiety respecting her spiritual state which had for months oppressed her mind. She was experiencing "the joy of God's salvation," and "walking at liberty" under "the light of His countenance." She was "rejoicing in Christ Jesus," and happy in the assurance of the Father's love towards her as His redeemed and adopted child. She delighted to feel that she was now

decidedly and irrevocably “on the Lord’s side,” for ever devoted and given up to Him. And much did she love to sing those touching words of Ruth—for she had heartily adopted them as her own—“Thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.”

Nothing, indeed, was more striking than her love to God’s people. Mingling as she had done almost exclusively with the people of the world, the difference between them and the true disciples of Christ became more clearly apparent to her than it does to those who have been brought up from childhood among the pious. The principles, the tastes, the pursuits, the habits of life, of those with whom she now came into daily intercourse, were almost entirely new to her; and although, doubtless, she might sometimes be surprised to find among them many imperfections and apparent inconsistencies, her heart still clung to them in the belief that they were essentially Christians; and to such of them as were most manifestly earnest and true, whatever their social condition, and however destitute of culture, her soul seemed to unite itself in warm sympathy and affection.

Of course, this love to God’s people is not mentioned as anything unusual in the character of a Christian. It is a universal characteristic of the family of God, one of the essential evidences of their regeneration. “We know that we have

passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Thrown very much by the nature of her engagements into worldly company, and with her natural buoyancy of spirits and fondness for society, her chief difficulty consisted in maintaining a spiritual and visible separation from the world. No doubt it would demand much prayerful effort to make natural and educational tendencies bend to the requirements of religious duty and disposition. It might sometimes be a struggle; but by grace she was enabled to conquer. She was occasionally placed in circumstances where it required no common degree of conscientious fidelity to confess Christ and maintain an adherence to practical piety. But I believe it may be truly said she never concealed her religious principles, or deviated from her usual practice, through fear, or shame, or complaisance. When visiting, or receiving at her house, her former friends whose sentiments and feelings with regard to religious matters she knew differed widely from her own, and well aware how her supposed fanaticism might be the object of their pity or contempt, she unequivocally persisted in all she would have thought it right to do if they had not been present. Unobtrusively and meekly she continued to fulfil her course—keeping the Sabbath Day holy unto the Lord,

attending, at all opportunities, the public means of grace, and showing, whenever occasion required, her esteem for Christ's faithful ministers and people. When her father and mother were coming to visit her, she said to her husband, "Now, Henry, don't omit family prayer morning and evening during their stay with us. They have never been used to it, but that should not prevent us from continuing our usual habits; it should rather induce us to be firm in maintaining them." Her parents remained with them many months: and we had much intercourse with them. They constantly attended our place of worship; and appeared to be much interested in the new character and new associations of their daughter.

Decision of character belonged to her naturally. Trained in the school of adversity, she had acquired the habit of endurance, fortitude, self-reliance, and firmness, in no ordinary degree,—together with almost restless activity and practical energy. And now that she had come under the influence of Divine grace, these valuable qualities of character—baptized with a new spirit, directed to new aims, and impelled by new motives, gave great depth and force to her whole Christian life. Constrained by the love of Christ, she had surrendered herself—her whole being and life, her heart, her energies, her acquirements, her family, her all—to her Redeemer and

Lord, "henceforth to live, not unto herself, but unto Him who died for her, and rose again." To be a Christian, thoroughly, consistently, and for ever, was now the ardent desire of her soul, with the "earnest hope and expectation that in nothing she should be ashamed, but that with all boldness, Christ should be magnified in her, whether by life or by death."

But this entire and fervent consecration of spirit did not prevent her from enjoying to the full the innocent amenities and pleasant fellowships of general society. She could enjoy equally the humour or the pathos of her brother's writings, but there was nothing of the romantic in her composition. She was no ascetic or recluse; nor was there any assumption or affectation of extraordinary piety. The very *reality* of that piety, united with clear good sense, forbad pretension of every kind—all was natural and true. She despised and detested affectation, assumed mannerisms, and shams of all sorts. There was none of these in herself; and wherever she saw them in others—and she could readily detect them—they were her thorough disgust. Sincerity, reality, truthfulness, integrity, were transparent in all she said and did. Always frank and open, she was the cheerful companion and the hearty friend; and affectionate, devoted, and true in all the relations of life, as well as prompt, decided, and energetic in the discharge of its

various duties. She was a woman of high soul, and as a Christian her appropriate motto would have been, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and a sound mind."

No wonder that with such qualities of character she should become a general favourite. She mingled freely with all classes, and apparently with equal interest. She seemed to care little for adventitious circumstances. In splendid drawing-rooms and lowly cottages she was equally at home, wherever she met with good sense and good character; for she carried with her everywhere a genial and affectionate spirit. But her deep heart's sympathy was only with those whom she believed to be Christ's genuine disciples—"the excellent of the earth; in them was all her delight." As to the Sabbath and its sacred services, they never seemed long enough for her. Frequently would she say at the close of the evening service, "May we go home with you, and stop with you a little?" Our house was more than a mile from the chapel, and hers a considerable distance on its opposite side; but all that was nothing in her account, if she could but have a little more savour of Sabbath enjoyments. So, after supper and family prayer, she would say, "Can't we have a hymn?" It was usually that sweet hymn—for she greatly delighted in it—

“When, O dear Jesus, when shall I
Behold Thee all serene;
Blest in perpetual Sabbath day,
Without a veil between?”

“Assist me while I wander here
Amidst a world of cares;
Incline my hear to pray in faith,
And then accept my prayers.

“The Spirit of my Father give,
To be my Guide and Friend,
To light my path to ceaseless joys—
To Sabbaths without end.”

Tucker's was the tune we always sung to it.

The time was not far distant, though none of us were aware of it, when she was to enter on the realization of those “ceaseless joys.” No indication of disease was yet apparent; but we often feared that her incessant exertions were undermining her health. It was difficult, however, to prevail on her to relax them.

On one of our annual holidays Mrs. Burnett and her husband desired to join us in a month's excursion to the Lakes. Greatly did we all enjoy our drives and walks amid the noble and enchanting scenery of Windermere, Rydal Water, Keswick, and Coniston. Near the shores of Coniston a striking incident occurred, and it is on that account the excursion is referred to. It was one of the most glorious of autumnal days, when we were walking by the banks of the calm, sweet Coniston—one of the loveliest of

the English lakes; the health-breathing winds were playing over the waving golden fields, and the shadow of the mighty mountain known as "The Old Man" lay mirrored on the lake, and we were all rejoicing in the beauty and grandeur of the scene. Mrs. Burnett was walking with my wife, and Mr. Burnett and myself were following at some distance, when an old woman of very decent appearance passed by, weeping and groaning heavily. The ladies stopped, and, addressing her, said, "You seem to be in deep trouble. What is it distresses you?" "I am, indeed, ladies, in trouble. I had a daughter—a dear, good daughter as ever mother had. She was in service a good way from here. She was taken ill and died after a short illness; but that is all I know. If I could but find out something more about her illness and death, and whether she was taken care of, poor dear child!" And the poor woman sobbed as if her heart would break, as she added, "I have been praying to God for some comfort, but I don't know how it is to come." "Where was your daughter in service?" asked the ladies with much expression of sympathy. "In Manchester." "Indeed; we come from Manchester. In what part of the town?—and do you know the name of the family with whom she lived? Perhaps we might be able to find out something about your daughter." "In Broughton;" and she mentioned the name

of the family. "Why," said Mrs. Burnett, "I know the family well. I have often been at their house. What sort of a young person in appearance? Was she so-and-so?"—describing her. "Yes, that was my poor daughter, for you have exactly described her." "Well, tell me your name and where you live, and I will get information from the lady and let you have it." Mrs. Burnett accordingly did so, and was enabled to furnish the poor mother with such information as afforded her no little relief and comfort in her affliction. It was a very interesting account which Mrs. Burnett had received of the young person's illness, and of the kind attentions that had been paid her by her mistress and the family. Who can doubt that the gracious Lord had looked with pity on the poor woman's sorrows, and "heard the voice of her weeping," and ordered it, in His providence, that she should meet in this remarkable way—in this distant and secluded place—with an unknown friend, who was able to administer to her wounded heart the consolation she was so eagerly longing and praying for?

It was about seven years after our first introduction to her that our beloved friend's health began to show serious symptoms of decline; but "Hope" continued to "tell a flattering tale." She could not believe she was really ill. But she consented to go to London to consult Sir

James Clark. Yet, a short time before she went, she insisted on being three times at worship on the Sabbath—the Lord's Supper, according to our custom, occupying an hour in the afternoon. Before the evening service she said, "Do let me go again. It may be the last time of my hearing my pastor;" and so it proved, for I was leaving home for a while, and when I returned she was laid up at her sister's house in London, and never left it till she entered the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We went up to London to see her. Deeply affecting was the interview, for it was too evident that it would most probably be our last meeting on earth. She appeared, after the first gush of emotion, surprisingly calm, resting in Jesus in well-assured hope, mingled, however, with the deepest solemnity and humility of spirit. We commended her into the hands of her Redeemer, fully aware that our next act of worship together would be before His throne. The details of the interview and of the final parting were too touching for recital.

Before her strength had quite failed she wrote to a friend, thinking herself a little better, "I cannot sit up very long together, but I would praise the Lord with all my mind, soul, and strength for thus much of improvement. My mind is tranquil. I feel that Christ is all-sufficient, and that He is able to wash away even my sins,

which have been very, very heinous. My faith is weak, because I fear my dear children will be buffeted about. I wish, if I should be taken from them, to commit them entirely to their Heavenly Father.”

The rest must be told chiefly in the words of her husband, communicated by him at different times. “Sometimes, she says she hopes she is not too confident. She often expresses herself strongly as to the thankfulness she ought to feel for having been brought to a knowledge of the truth before this sickness; she feels it so difficult to collect her thoughts now. She has a deep sense of her own unworthiness—lamenting her unprofitableness as a professing Christian. She asked me to read the fourteenth of John. I went on to the fifteenth, and when I read the words, ‘Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away,’ she cried much, saying that she had never borne any fruit of active usefulness. I tried to comfort her, by saying that some had greater opportunities of working for Christ than others. ‘But I have lost,’ she said, ‘so many opportunities.’ How many times I read the twenty-third Psalm and the fifty-first, I am afraid to say. She sometimes had not strength to hear all; but sinner as she knew she was, she had not the least fear of death, although she dreaded the actual dying. At one time she said to me, ‘I think I should like to pray aloud.’ I

knelt down by the bed, and her feeble voice was raised with much earnestness for me, the dear children, and her other relatives, until weakness and tears prevented utterance, and we rose in the midst, much overcome,—knowing that our Saviour would finish what his poor weak servant had in His name begun. Some days before she died, the medical attendants intimated that her time might be very short,—she was herself quite hoping for her end. She shed a few tears, and then said to those around, “Do not think I am not willing to die; these tears are not because I am leaving the world, but I am leaving behind many whom I love. But I have no fear, I have a sure hope. Oh what a comfort to be able to rest in these promises: ‘When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the fire kindle upon thee.’”

In Forster's *Life of Dickens*, vol. ii. p. 427, we have a letter from Dickens to his friend, written after visiting his dying sister. Forster writes, quoting an earlier record by Dickens, “This day eleven years poor dear Mary died;” and then adds, “That was written on the 7th of May, 1848, but another sadness impending at the time was taking his thoughts still further back, to when he trotted about with his little elder sister

in the small garden to the house at Portsea. For the faint hope which Elliston had given him in Paris had since completely broken down; and I was to hear in less than two months after the letter just quoted how nearly the end was come. 'A change took place in poor Fanny,' he wrote on the 5th of July, 'about the middle of the day, yesterday, which took me out there last night. The cough suddenly ceased almost, and, strange to say, she immediately became aware of her hopeless state—to which she resigned herself, after an hour's unrest and struggle, with extraordinary sweetness and constancy. The irritability passed, and all hope faded away; though only two nights before she had been planning for "after Christmas." She is greatly changed. I had a long interview with her to-day alone; and when she expressed some wishes about the funeral, and her being buried in unconsecrated ground (Mr. Burnett's family are Dissenters), I asked her whether she had any care or anxiety in the world; she said, 'No, none;' it was hard to die at such a time of life, but she had no alarm whatever in the prospect of the change; felt sure we should meet again in a better world; and though they had said she might rally for a time, did not really wish it. She said she was quite calm and happy, relied upon the mediation of Christ, and had no terror at all. She had worked very hard, even when ill, but believed that was in her nature,

and neither regretted nor complained of it. Burnett had always been very good to her, they had never quarrelled; she was sorry to think of his going back to such a lonely home; and was distressed about her children, but not painfully so. She showed me how thin and worn she was; spoke about an invention she had heard of that she would like to have tried for the deformed child's back; called to my mind all our sister Letitia's patience and steadiness; and though she shed tears sometimes, clearly impressed upon me that her mind was made up and at rest. I asked her very often if she could ever recall anything that she could leave to my doing, to put it down, or mention it to somebody if I was not there, but she firmly believed there was nothing—nothing. Her husband being young, she said, and her children infants, she could not help thinking, sometimes, that it would be very long in the course of nature before they were reunited, but that she knew that was a mere human fancy, and could have no reality after she was dead. Such an affecting exhibition of strength and tenderness, in all that early decay, is quite indiscribable. I need not tell you how it moved me. I cannot look round upon the dear children here without some misgiving that this sad disease will not perish out of our blood with her; but I am sure I have no selfishness in the thought, and God knows how small the world looks to one who

comes out of such a sick-room on a bright summer day.

“‘I don’t know why I write this before going to bed. I only know that in the very pity and grief of my heart, I feel as if it were doing something.’ After not many weeks she died, and the little child who was her last anxiety did not long survive her.”

Who can fail to be struck with the amiable light in which this very beautiful and touching letter places Mr. Dickens, written, as it was, to his friend the day after visiting his sister? The “little deformed child,” Harry, was a singular child—meditative and quaint in a remarkable degree. He was the original, as Mr. Dickens told his sister, of little “Paul Dombey.” Harry had been taken to Brighton, as “little Paul” is represented to have been, and had there, for hours lying on the beach with his books, given utterance to thoughts quite as remarkable for a child as those which are put into the lips of Paul Dombey. But little Harry loved his Bible, and evidently loved Jesus. The child seemed never tired of reading his Bible and his hymns, and other good books suited to his age: and the bright little fellow was always happy. He died in the arms of a dear, dear nephew of mine since passed away, John Griffin.

On the death of our beloved friend, I went up to London, in compliance with her dying

request, to officiate at her funeral. Her grave was selected in a secluded and picturesque nook in Highgate Cemetery. All the male members of her family attended. To me it could not be other than a peculiarly solemn and affecting occasion. Mr. Dickens appeared to feel it very deeply. He spoke to me in terms of great respect and affection for his departed sister—he had always so spoken of her—as I accompanied him in his brougham on my way to my brother's house. His behaviour to myself was most courteous and kind.

Our congregation mourned with unusual sorrow the loss of their friend, for she had been greatly beloved by them, and by a very large circle of acquaintances besides. I preached her funeral sermon from the words, "Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," 2 Cor. v. 5. Her husband is still a pilgrim. He knows that his "citizenship is in heaven, from whence also he is looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

CHAPTER IX.

Sunday school system—Social influence—Mr. Samuel Fletcher—Deputation of working men—Sunday school report—Peter Jackson—George Darling—Superintendent—His character and influence—Letter of Rev. Robert Stevens—Monumental tablet—Mrs. Borrowdale—Charter Street—William Webster—Mr. Cobden—W. Webster's illness and death—Ellen Cave—Sunday school teachers—Male teachers—Female teachers—General intelligence of the Sunday school—Public tea-meetings—Manchester—Hastings brethren and friends.

THE importance of the Sunday school system amid the vast populations of the manufacturing districts cannot be overrated, not only with regard to its direct religious influence, but with reference also to its effect indirectly as a social and moral agency. This effect has often attracted the notice of observant persons who profess no special concern for the religious interests of the people. At the time of the great cotton famine, many years since, we were told by Mr. Samuel Fletcher, the well-known excellent deacon of the Grosvenor Street Church, and an eminent county magistrate, of a conversation he had with Mr. Maude, the

then stipendiary magistrate of Manchester. It was a terrible time for the working people, and indeed for all classes connected with or dependent on the cotton trade. Throughout the extensive region of Lancashire, many thousands were out of work for many weeks; and all that authorized arrangements, and combined social agency, and private benevolence could do was inadequate to meet the wants of the distressed multitudes. The saddest consequences to social order were to be feared from their hungry impatience, and outbreaks and depredations were daily looked for. But to the astonishment of anxious observers, little or nothing of the kind occurred in any part of the county. Patiently and almost uncomplainingly did those vast masses bear their protracted privations. No riots, no violence, scarcely an act of dishonesty, were heard of through all this dreary and weary time. We were utterly amazed by it. "How do you account for it?" asked Mr. Fletcher of the stipendiary, who was not supposed to feel any particular interest in religious people and their proceedings. "Oh, it is all owing to the influence of your Sunday schools and your town missions, and so on," said the magistrate. "Do you think so?" "Certainly; all the magistrates know that." This was a valuable testimony from such a quarter, and it was true.

On an occasion of dispute about wages between

the workmen and the masters connected with the engineering and the iron works of the neighbourhood, when a strike had lasted many weeks, two very decent, respectable looking men called on me, stating that they were deputed by a general committee of the working men in those branches, to wait on the various ministers of religion with the hope of engaging their interposition in the matter. They were evidently sensible, intelligent men. I said, "But would the workmen have confidence in us—I mean, as to our impartiality? Would they not suppose we should be likely to lean more to the masters and *their* interests than to the men? I thought that the workmen were, as a rule, prejudiced against ministers of religion; so that, to tell you the truth, I am rather surprised at your appealing to us at all." "Well," they replied, "that may, no doubt, be the feeling of some of the men, but it is not a general one. They know you too well for that. Most of the best and steadiest men in all departments have been trained in your Sunday schools, and whenever steady men are wanted for confidential positions, the masters or the overlookers apply to the superintendents of the Sunday schools to recommend them young men of ability and good character. For instance, we know your Sunday school very well, and though we do not belong to your congregation ourselves, you are well known to us; and we are quite confident as

to the good feeling of the ministers." The practical result was what we, of course, expected, that the masters declined our interposition in any way; and so eventually it was settled among themselves. Still, I could not but feel that the statement made by the workmen's deputation was of considerable value.

The following report is given, not as anything extraordinary, but as presenting, probably, a fair average specimen of the character and working of the Lancashire Sunday schools. It is the first report of the Rusholme Road Schools ever printed. I preserved it, most likely, on account of its allusions to some cases that had peculiarly interested me, though I had nothing whatever to do with its preparation or publication. But I cannot but think it exhibits some features well worthy of notice; and I have, therefore, decided to present it *in extenso*.

REPORT—MARCH, 1852.

THE Committee, in presenting their Report, can truly say that at no period did the Schools present stronger claims on the benevolent regard of those who desire to promote the glory of God and the well-being of man. In giving an outline of their general condition and routine, the Committee wish as far as possible to show the spirit in which their operations are conducted; but not for the purpose of exalting man's labour, for they would ever remember that "neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

RUSHOLME ROAD SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Superintendent.—Mr. George Darling.

Secretaries.—Mr. John Thompson; Mr. Anthony Borrowdale.

This School was opened on the 10th of June, 1827, since which period 8281 Scholars have passed through the books. A glance at the last seven years will show the steady increase of numbers:—

In 1845 the numbers were	552
1846	711
1847	768
1848	780
1849	830
1850	874
1851	963

The present number is—

In the Girls' School	504
In the Boys' ditto	490
	994
Total	994

Of this number about 450—or deducting the Infant Classes, more than one half—of the Scholars, are from the ages of fourteen to forty, and upwards of 130 have been from five to sixteen years in the School.

This class of young persons, so difficult to retain in some institutions, afford to us special ground of encouragement and hope; and it is most gratifying to notice the warm and lively interest they continue to manifest. One pleasing instance of this is seen in the fact that 560 of them have purchased their own Bibles for use in the School; thus relieving to a considerable extent, by this voluntary act, the pressure upon the general funds of the institution. Several of the Senior Scholars are Tract distributors; others of them are forwarding the Temperance movement, and identifying themselves with other benevolent schemes; while on the part of those who are mem-

bers of the Church, a most commendable anxiety is manifested for the spiritual welfare of their fellow Scholars.

It may not be uninteresting to observe that there are in the School—

30 Married Scholars,	118 without Fathers,
37 Orphans,	89 without Mothers.

The present number of Teachers is as follows :—

In the Girls' School	40
In the Boys' School	43
	—
Total	83

Sixty-four are members of the Church; and it is pleasing to notice that 30 of them were once Scholars where they are now seeking to impress on the youthful mind the "truth as it is in Jesus."

Of the whole band the Committee trust it may be said that "one thing" is constantly aimed at, the bringing of souls to Christ. They rejoice with the Teachers that such manifest tokens of the Divine favour have been graciously vouchsafed, and earnestly pray that in a yet larger degree the influences of the Spirit may descend, to crown their labours with still more abundant success.

While the Committee bid the Teachers "God speed" in their labours of love, they would remind them that the review of the past urges powerful motives for renewed devotion in the work. During the last year death has entered their ranks—

"And with his sickle keen"

cut down some of their promising youth. Of the three scholars removed, most pleasing testimony was given of their meetness for heaven. One youth, long remarkable for his attachment to the service of God, died repeating, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" while another who

had for several years loved the Saviour, breathed, as he peacefully fell asleep, “Glory, glory, glory!”

Of the Teachers one of the most beloved ones was unexpectedly removed from her work almost without having to wait for the “coming of the Angel.” The testimony of a holy life, as well as the truly Christian peace and even joy that marked her dying moments, leave no doubt that her happy spirit has entered the realms of Glory, to “be ever with the Lord.” She has been early “called home,” but “being dead yet speaketh.”

The various agencies in connection with the School progress favourably, and were never in a more happy and efficient position.

THE LIBRARY.

In the General School Library there are, including recent donations from Messrs. Clayton, Coward, and Gasquoine 680 vols.

In the Young Men’s Improvement Society 282 „

In the Junior do. do. 130 „

—————
 Making a total of 1092 vols.

This is a most valuable adjunct to the School, and one which cannot but tell powerfully for good. The Committee feel assured that the best antidote to the immense mass of unwholesome literature now issuing from the press is the circulation of such books as these Libraries contain.

They mark also with pleasure, that besides this weekly exchange of books, 750 periodicals are purchased monthly by the Scholars.

SCHOOL MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

This Society engages the warmest affections of the Scholars, and a very lively interest is felt in its welfare. The amounts received on its behalf during the last few years, were as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
1845	33	3	0
1846	32	6	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
1847	26	8	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
1848	23	18	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
1849	28	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
1850	36	15	11
1851	57	10	9

making, since 1837, the year in which the School decided to support a Native Teacher, the sum of £460 17s. 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. In the analysis of the last year's amount, it is pleasing to observe that one of the Senior Classes subscribed £7 1s.; another, £6 11s. 6d.; another £5 10s.; another, £4 9s. Some portion of these amounts was handed, at the request of the Classes, to the Town Mission, to the Irish Evangelical Missions, and to the French Evangelical Society.

In connection with this Society there is a Girls' Missionary Sewing Party; and once a month there are many busy little fingers at work, making garments for the Heathen. Within the last two months, several letters have been received from the Missionary and from the coloured children in South Africa, gratefully acknowledging the receipt of the last box of clothing sent from the School.

YOUNG MEN'S IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

This Society celebrated its eighth anniversary last October, and since its formation 182 young men have been connected with it. It now consists of 44 members, who meet weekly, for the purpose of delivering Essays, and discussing topics of general interest. It has a most select Library of 282 volumes, and the recent advance of its subscription to one shilling per quarter, enables it to take in the principal Reviews, such as the *British Quarterly*, the *Edinburgh*, the *Quarterly*, the *Westminster*, the *Eclectic*, and others. The taste for reading which this Society has created or fostered, may be inferred from the fact that

during the past year 864 books have issued from the Library. It is generously aided by the Teachers, nearly all of whom are regular or honorary members, and several of the Congregation are enrolled as its supporters. The Committee regard it as a most important agency in the School, presenting as it does such special advantages to young men; and they are happy to learn that its meetings display that catholicity of spirit which marks it as an affectionate brotherhood, worthy of increased sympathy and support. A French class, conducted by Mr. Hatzfeld, is in efficient operation in connection with this Society.

JUNIOR IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

This Society arose from the interest excited through the Young Men’s Society, and to meet a demand which that could not supply. Youths from ten to seventeen years of age, if scholars in this school, are admitted, and great interest is felt by the members in its progress. It also meets weekly, and has a Library, consisting of 130 volumes.

TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

For some years after its establishment in 1842, it was confined strictly to the School; afterwards, its door of admission was opened wider, and there have been entered on its books 970 members. Most gratifying is it to observe that more than half of the Teachers and 460 of the scholars are identified with this important Society. Its meetings are held weekly in the Branch School at Saville Street. In connection with this institution there has recently been formed a—

“BAND OF HOPE.”

This Band was established in order to create a greater interest among the younger portion of the School, and since its formation 206 of the Scholars and Teachers have connected themselves with it. The Committee congratulate the Teachers on the auspicious commencement of this

Society, as they consider it eminently calculated to shield the promising youth from a vice so insidious in its approaches, corrupting in its influence, and appalling in its effects.

CLOTHING SOCIETY.

Provident habits are encouraged through the benevolent efforts of this Society. Through the liberality of the Congregational Dorcas Society, twopence is added to every shilling which the scholars subscribe. Last year the amount received from fifty subscribers was £20 5s. The Committee recommend with much pleasure the fostering of these habits among the Scholars, and approvingly refer to the efforts recently made by the Teachers to induce them to save their pence. They are glad to hear that several accounts are opened for the Scholars in the Savings Bank, under the supervision of the Officers of the School, and would suggest the desirableness of every facility being afforded for the construction of what may ultimately prove to the young ones the foundation of credit, respectability, and esteem.

FUNERAL SOCIETY.

The objects of this Society will be seen by an extract from one of its rules:—

“ There shall be three classes of members,—

1st.	Those who pay	1d.	per month ;
2nd.	„	2d.	„
3rd.	„	3d.	„

“ The relatives at the decease of a member of the first class will be entitled to

receive	£2 10 0
“ Of the second class	5 0 0
“ Of the third class	7 10 0”

The Society has 100 members, and its funds, which have been steadily increasing, now amount to £93 2s. 11d.

The donations of Honorary Members rendering it, in some measure, a charitable institution, entitle it to a

greater amount of interest than would otherwise be allowed by the Bank.

CLASSES.

In addition to the various Societies referred to, there are other agencies in operation, namely, Singing, Writing, and Arithmetic Classes; and several of the Teachers meet their Classes one night in the week, for prayer and general instruction.

THE BRANCH SCHOOL, SAVILLE STREET.

Superintendent.—Mr. J. A. Knight.

This Branch was opened September 8, 1848; and notwithstanding the numerous obstacles it has had to encounter, was never in a more encouraging position. The number of Scholars admitted since the opening, is 576; the present number on the books is—

Girls	126
Boys	200
Total	326

These are taught by 24 Teachers, who, in prayerful dependence on God’s blessing, are earnestly seeking the spiritual welfare of their charge. While doing this, they have also directed their efforts to the amelioration of the temporal condition of the Scholars, and have established, with much success, a *Clothing Club*. Eighty-seven of the Scholars contribute; and to this, in a great measure, may be ascribed the improved appearance of many of them.

A *Week-Evening Writing Class*, with its 65 members, is in active and efficient operation. A *Missionary Society* has also been recently established.

The review of the efforts made in this destitute and long-neglected district, affords much ground to hope that they will prove an extensive and lasting blessing to the neighbourhood; while the spirit in which the devoted Teachers pursue their work, increases the confidence that, ere long, the Divine promise will be verified in their

midst, and that "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree, which shall be to the Lord for a name—for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Eighteen of the Teachers are members of the Church. The Committee feel convinced, that in order to render the efforts of these Teachers more successful, increased accommodation is most essential. The Infant Class-room is so crowded, that future applicants must be refused until a larger one is obtained; while for the Senior Classes, *class-rooms* are indispensable, and without them the prosperity of the School must be considerably retarded.

The spirit in which the Teachers of both Schools are pursuing their work may be gathered from the following extracts:—

"We are ever supported and encouraged to go forward," says a Teacher in one of the reports, "because our Great Master has said, 'My Word shall not return unto Me void.'" "When cast down," writes another, "and led to cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' the earnest and fervent supplications of many of my Scholars have indeed cheered, encouraged, and strengthened me to go on, relying on the faithfulness of Him who 'hath chosen the weak things to confound the mighty, that no flesh should glory in His presence.'" "As I consider," writes another, "the great end of Sunday School teaching to be not merely sowing the seeds of knowledge, or watering the germ of understanding, but the implantation of right principles and *the salvation of souls*, it is a matter of deep regret that I cannot report any of my scholars as *decidedly* anxious respecting their eternal state; but though as yet no apparent success has crowned our efforts, are we not warranted to believe that, with the blessing of the Great Teacher, the 'bread now cast upon the waters shall be found after many days,' and at the gathering in of the Husbandman some fruit may be seen, though now it be hid behind the leaves?"

This is the spirit which the Committee trust is actuating all the Teachers, and they would claim on their behalf the sympathy and prayers of the Church. They would also request the same for those friends who have gone from this School and Congregation to the new and promising interest in CROWN STREET, DEANSGATE. Nine of them are labouring there in conjunction with a few others, and with manifest tokens of the Divine blessing. Still more recently, a Sunday School has been opened by two young men from the Rusholme Road School, in one of the lowest and most degraded parts of the city. Already they have received 53 Scholars, and at the Sabbath Evening Services the cellar in which the meetings are held is generally crowded; sometimes upwards of fifty adults, most of whom are, or have been, of an abandoned character, are found eagerly listening to the Word of God. A Temperance Society has been also established, and nearly 200 have taken the pledge. This almost totally neglected district offers a wide scope for Christian philanthropy, and the Committee trust that some others will soon be found to strengthen the hands of the devoted pioneers, and aid them in snatching “brands from the burning.”

From the foregoing Report it will be seen that in connection with this Church and Congregation the numbers are as follows:—

SCHOLARS in Rusholme Road Sunday School	994	
„ in Saville Street	326	
	—	1320
TEACHERS in Rusholme Road	83	
„ in Saville Street	24	
	—	107
		—
		1427

It is obvious that institutions so extensive and important

cannot be carried on efficiently without continued liberal support.

The Committee would not close their Report without devout and grateful acknowledgments to the goodness of God, for the evident tokens of Divine favour which have rested upon these institutions during the past year; and earnestly recommend them to the increased liberality and fervent prayers of all who are concerned for the prosperity of Zion.

Dr. TREASURER'S ACCOUNT—1851.

	£	s.	d.
Jan. 25, 1852.			
To Balance due to Treasurer	50	12	3
„ Chief Rent	21	0	0
„ Whitsuntide expenses	26	2	7
„ Cleaning	25	12	6
„ Joiner's work	16	15	0
„ Stationery	12	15	5
„ Gas	1	14	0
„ Deficiency arising from Parents' Tea Party	2	3	0
„ Treat to Scholars on the occasion of Her Majesty's visit	9	15	8
„ Share of platform at the Park at the same time	20	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£186	10	5

	£	s.	d.
Cr.			
March 2, 1851.			
By Collections after Sermons by Revds. J. Griffin and Dr. Halley	111	7	5
„ Subscriptions and Donations	7	4	0
„ Special Subscriptions towards expenses incurred on the occasion of Her Majesty's visit	25	0	0
„ Balance due to Treasurer	42	19	0
	<hr/>		
	£186	10	5

When I entered upon my pastoral work, the school consisted of some three hundred children, having been in operation about three years. Not long after, a vacancy having occurred in the

superintendency, Mr. Peter Jackson, an esteemed member of the Church, was unanimously requested to undertake it. Mr. Jackson had come from Hull, with a rising young family, to commence a business in Manchester in a manufacturing department. He and his amiable wife had been connected with the congregation at Fish Street, Hull, under the ministry of the able and excellent Thomas Stratten. He belonged to a family remarkable, all of them, both on the male and female sides, for talent and energy, Peter sharing very largely in the family character. It was soon perceived that the choice with regard to the superintendency had been well directed. Accepting the appointment with great modesty, he gave himself to the work with the most serious thoughtfulness; in no vain and heedless spirit, as if pleased to be *in office*, or to fulfil a prescribed routine of duty with mechanical and perfunctory order and propriety. In willing consecration to a service to which he believed his Lord was calling him, he threw his whole heart and mind into the work. And he possessed a mind and a heart worthy of such a work—a work second only to that of the pastor in importance and responsibility. Not the *work* only, properly so called, of the school, but its general character and influence lay near his heart. He thought much about the relation in which the superintendent should consider himself as stand-

ing towards every teacher and to all the classes, and of the influence which his own spirit and character might be expected to exert on the entire body.

That influence was exceedingly powerful ; for there was very much in his character and aptitudes singularly fitting him for such a position. He was characterized by remarkable sweetness of spirit and temper, and by a gentleness and courtesy of manners extremely winning, his countenance and tones of voice indicating the kindness of his heart, and carrying with them an attractive and suasive power that was felt by all his associates ; and every one felt that he had in the superintendent a friend and a brother. Such qualities as these, united to a manifest talent for leadership, both as a highly intelligent, graceful, and effective speaker, and as a prudent, firm, and self-reliant director, soon attached to him the universal affection and confidence of the school. A considerable number of persons of both sexes connected with reputable families, and of good education, were attracted to its ranks as " fellow-helpers " in the work ; and under Mr. Jackson's able management, aided by the hearty co-operation of the well-qualified secretaries and the whole body of the teachers, the Rusholme Road School speedily became conspicuous among the numerous similar institutions in the neighbourhood for intelligence, discipline, harmony, and general

effectiveness. Such, I believe, is its reputation in a good degree to the present day, and to Mr. Jackson's influence it must be originally traced. All his children were identified with the school, first as scholars—as were many other children of respectable parents—and then as teachers, and all of them inherited their father's devotedness to its interests. Those who are still living in the neighbourhood are beloved members of the Church, and “zealous of good works.” Nothing, indeed, has been more striking to my mind than the steadfast and strong attachment of teachers and scholars to their endeared Sunday school for now half a century past. Down to a very recent period, there were persons fifty or sixty years of age, who had steadily kept their place in its ranks as scholars from almost the earliest days that memory could recall.

Mr. Jackson loved the Church as much as he loved the school, and when he became a deacon he carried the same qualities of character into the discharge of that office as he did into that of superintendent. His deportment towards his pastor and his brother-deacons was uniformly of the most delightful kind, and he was as much beloved and honoured by them, and by the whole Church, as he was by the teachers of the school. His removal by death, after protracted suffering, which he bore with meek Christian patience, and during which he evinced much

spirituality of mind and calm trust in the Saviour, was mourned with the deepest sorrow as a grievous loss to us all.

Mr. Jackson had brought with him from Hull a youth of about sixteen years of age, to be employed in his warehouse and to live in his home. George Darling was a singularly interesting character. Decidedly and deeply pious in early life, he was marked by a thoughtfulness, and a habit of what may be called moral observation, unusual in one of his years. There was not only an amiableness of behaviour and sweetness of temper, indicating a beautiful natural disposition, but also, while he was yet but a youth, such a solidity of judgment, such a maturity of prudence and discretion, that it might well be supposed he had been accustomed to read with deep attention and reflection the earlier chapters, at least, of the "Proverbs," and to make them the directory of his principles and conduct; for certainly his whole character seemed to be modelled according to their design—"to give to the young man knowledge and discretion." And connected with this "discretion," and perhaps partly arising from it, there was a remarkably quick perception of the duties of his station and ready aptitude for their discharge. There are some persons who appear to instinctively discern and appreciate the pro-

prieties of any given position in life, and to adapt themselves to its requirements as though "to the manner born." So it was with George Darling. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson used frequently to say that, whether in business or in the family he appeared to understand at once the becoming and suitable thing, as well as the positive duties devolving on him, and to comport himself in accordance with them as if he had been born into the place. The simple fact was, he was a youth of a most observant mind and of high conscientiousness, and was constantly studying to do his duty and to "approve himself to God," and therefore he did his duty cheerfully and without reserve.

He had been a teacher in the school some years when Mr. Jackson died; and such was the impression he had produced on his fellow-teachers, that all eyes were directed to him as the future superintendent; and though there were many beyond him in age, in education, and in social position, George Darling was unanimously elected to the office. No better choice could have been possibly made, as the issue most unmistakably proved. All were struck with the resemblance of his character to that of his predecessor. Without anything like apparent imitation, there were evidently the same inherent qualities, and not a little of the same characteristic deportment—the same kindliness,

frankness, cheerfulness, promptitude, decision, and untiring activity and zeal, together with the same suavity and natural politeness of manners, that had been so conspicuous in Peter Jackson. If Mr. Jackson and Mr. Darling are to be taken as specimens of the population of Hull in general, I should say they are the best-mannered people in the land. It might be supposed that a rougher exterior, and manners less refined, would be more acceptable and effective among the hard-headed and somewhat hard-faced young people out of the factories who crowd the Sunday schools in the North. But this would be a mistake. Real, unaffected urbanity of manners attracts and sways them, when associated with evident superiority of knowledge and of talent, and manifest kindness of heart. As a rule, an office of this kind is best filled by men who undertake it with a view not so much to govern as to *influence*; and to influence, as the Saviour did, by personal example of wisdom, humility, and love. These qualities were conspicuous in Mr. Darling, so that, young as he was, his moral power grew and spread until he became almost the idol of the school, and his name as a talisman among them, and his word a very oracle. Yet he seemed to exert no *authority*. It was in reality almost absolute; but he himself appeared to be little else than *primus inter pares*—the foremost in service, the chiefest in labour. Hence, one

spirit pervaded the whole community—for the school *was a community* in the truest sense of the word,—the spirit and character of the superintendent diffusing vitality, ardour, and energy everywhere. He himself seemed to be everywhere, and in everything, but without officiousness or hurry. Nothing was thought to be complete or satisfactory if his hand had not been in it. In seeking or changing situations in business, Mr. Darling's opinion was considered essential. If young men or families had to emigrate, as in bad times many had, Mr. Darling was expected to manage it. If a marriage was to take place, Mr. Darling was looked for to add gladness to the scene by his genial presence and perennial smile, and to arrange the little matters of the social circle. If any were sick, Mr. Darling was sure to be soon in the sick-room. And at every funeral, Mr. Darling was there to soothe the sorrows of the mourners, and to give a devotional and edifying direction to their thoughts. The wonder was how he could find time and strength for it all. His industry and elasticity of spirits were marvellous. The ordinary business of the school, as he and the secretaries discharged it, would have seemed enough without anything besides. After one of our Monday evening prayer-meetings, at which Mr. Darling was as uniformly present as at any meetings of the school, he had slipped

away to his counting-house, a mile from the chapel, to finish some business, according to his custom; and desiring some conference with him, I waited at his house for his return. While there, the two secretaries, Messrs. John Thompson and Anthony Borrowdale, came in. "Well, young men," I said, "what are you here for at this late hour?"—it was then approaching ten o'clock. "It is high time for you to be getting home to bed." "Bed-time, sir! that's a long way off yet." "Why so?" "Well, we have to go through all the class-books—to check off the names of absentee scholars, to note down particularly the sick, and to arrange generally for next Sunday's work. We shall not part for two hours yet." "But do you actually go through the same work every week?" "Yes, every Monday night." I was fairly amazed; for these young men had been attending the prayer-meeting as usual, and appeared as cheerful and blithe as if they were going to a feast.

The Sunday school was recognized as one of the organizations of the Church, and of vital importance to its interests and designs, as being properly a department of its own agency, rather than as a separate and distinct institution. Several of the deacons and members of the Church and congregation, as such, were always on its committee, together with representatives from the body of the teachers, elected by themselves; and the pastor, as

president (*ex officio*), attended the meetings as often as was practicable or thought specially desirable. As most of the leading teachers, and very many, in course of time, of the elder scholars, were in fellowship with the Church, the whole may be said to have constituted one body; and all acted in unison, with one object in view. Mr. Darling, like his predecessor, *loved the Church*, and sought its welfare in every way. He sat with the choir in the gallery behind the pulpit, from which he could see the whole congregation. His quick eye readily discerned the face of a stranger, especially if a young man, for he was looking eagerly for such. As soon as the service closed he would be round at the porch to meet the young man as the congregation departed. Introducing himself kindly, with a few gentle words he would ascertain if the unknown person was a stranger in the town, or belonged to any other congregation. On finding, as he often did, that the young man had lately come from some other place, and was unconnected with a congregation in Manchester, he would invite him to tea on the Sunday evening, and bring him to the chapel again. And thus many a youth, who might otherwise have been left to wander away unnoticed and unknown, and perhaps to be drawn into evil society and evil ways, was brought by Mr. Darling's influence into connection with the Sunday school, and with the people of God, and led on in the paths of piety and peace.

Nor did he confine his attention to the welfare of the young people to the period of their continuance in the school or in the congregation. He took special note of those who were leaving, and wherever they went they were sure to be followed by letters of affectionate and judicious counsel, admonition, and encouragement; and correspondence was kept up with them for years after their removal. In this way his correspondence grew to be absolutely immense.

Besides all his work in connection with the school and the congregation, he found time to attend most of the public meetings of the great religious societies, and other occasional meetings of a philanthropic kind, so frequently held in Manchester. The Young Men's Christian Association, which comprehended representatives of all sections of the Christian Church—clergymen of the Establishment uniting with Nonconformist ministers in its support and public advocacy,—had his special sympathy and very effective cooperation. Many a young man was introduced to it by his agency. Indeed, he seemed to be always "devising means" of usefulness, and always carrying them into effect. Yet there was nothing fitful or capricious in his proceedings, nothing like scheming to start new things of his own, or contrivances to bring *himself* to the front. All was modest, simple, sincere. And he did all with such a joyous heart, such a cheerful

countenance, such an agile step, such a ready hand, that everybody about him caught, more or less, the inspiration of his zeal. "He served the Lord, his God, with joyfulness and gladness of heart," and "the joy of the Lord was his strength." And as he appeared to be never "weary" and always happy "in well-doing," no gloom or sullenness in the work of the Lord could live in his presence; and sluggishness and selfishness were put utterly to shame.

The secret of all Mr. Darling's indefatigable industry was his steady and ardent piety. The fire of holy love was kept brightly burning on the altar of his own heart. He evidently attended as diligently to the cultivation of his own vineyard as to that of others. There are "workers" who seem to be nothing but *workers* in the barest and driest sense, yet, it may be, hard workers withal—even remarkable for their activity and bustle, perfectly faultless in the matter of punctuality and order, but in whom one can discern little beyond or deeper than habit of routine or love of "work;" who appear to have no spontaneous spring of vital energy within themselves. Their personal religion seems low and inert; their spiritual sympathies are feeble and inefficacious. They are active or steady "workers," and that is all that can be said of them. Mr. Darling did not borrow *his* religious industry from the mere habits of the warehouse. He was

“filled with the Spirit.” Deep within him, it was an upspringing “fountain of living water,” from whence flowed forth those abundant streams of holy influence that made him a blessing wherever he moved.

No doubt his opportunities of mental cultivation were less than might have been desired. His reading must have been restricted within a narrow compass, and much did he regret it. But, quick of apprehension and intent on self-improvement, he was constantly endeavouring to make the most of the slender advantages he possessed, hastily culling flowers or gathering fruit as he passed along, like the disciples plucking the ears of corn that grew by the wayside, and eating as they walked. He listened attentively to the preaching of the Word, and it was easy to perceive from his social prayers and his addresses and speeches that he had profited by it, and was turning it to personal and practical uses.

It might naturally be suspected that, with such earnest and almost incessant religious occupation, less attention was given to the claims of secular business than prudence or duty dictated. Happily, in his case, there was no ground of fear with regard to this point. His diligence in business was no less remarkable than his assiduity in the school or in the Church. Persons in any way connected with him in commercial affairs—he had become a partner in some iron-works—had

no reason to think he allowed his religious or social engagements to interfere with the calls and interests of business. His conscientiousness and his prudence alike preserved him from that danger. Punctuality, steadiness, thoughtful attention, soundness of judgment, and absolute integrity marked all his conduct in this sphere of life as well as in all others, so that no discredit was brought on his good name or his Christian profession. Most truly, indeed, might it be said of him, "He adorned the doctrine of God, his Saviour, in all things."

Since writing the foregoing pages, the following letter has reached me from an unknown friend, the Rev. Robert Stevens, M.A., of Coleford, Gloucestershire :—

"October 24, 1882.

"REV. JAMES GRIFFIN.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"A dear brother of mine once attended your ministry and Sunday school at Rusholme Road, Manchester, and was led to Christ. Soon after, I was also led to Christ, and partly through Mr. Darling. My brother soon left Manchester, and is now, after some years of devoted labour for Jesus, gone home to glory. I have been led into the ministry, and have laboured here, with God's blessing on me, for twenty-four years, and all my seven children love Christ. I heard your

name mentioned the other day, and it brought back fragrant memories, and I thought I should like to send you a line. . . . Fruit is growing now in many places unknown to you, though you sowed the seed.

“Yours with great affection,
“ROBERT STEVENS.”

When I resigned my charge I left Mr. Darling a deacon of the Church. He was as much respected by my successor, Dr. Thompson, as by myself. Prematurely worn out by his incessant labours, he died, unmarried, aged forty-eight. His fellow-teachers erected a beautiful mural monument to his memory in the large school-room, built after we left, with the following excellent inscription, as on the next page.

That inscription abundantly confirms all that has been said of him in the foregoing pages. No wonder that with such a character his influence should have been so great and beneficial as it was, and that his name should still be fragrant in the homes and hearts of the Sunday school teachers and scholars and of the congregation generally. Its fragrance has been widely diffused by those who, once connected with the Rusholme Road School, have since settled in different parts of this country and the colonies; and it may be as truly said *now* as when the inscription was written, “His memory dwells in the loving hearts of thousands.”

IN MEMORY OF
 THE BELOVED
 GEORGE DARLING,
 SUPERINTENDENT
 FOR 19 YEARS OF
 RUSHOLME ROAD SUNDAY SCHOOL.
 ELECTED TEACHER IN 1834;
 SUPERINTENDENT IN 1845;
 DEACON IN 1852.

HIS COURSE WAS DISTINGUISHED BY
 EARNEST PIETY,
 DILIGENT, SYSTEMATIC, AND SELF-DENYING LABOUR,
 WISE COUNSEL, AND TENDER SYMPATHY.
 LIVING NEAR TO GOD,
 HE EXHIBITED IN A MARKED DEGREE
 HIS SAVIOUR'S CONCERN FOR SOULS,
 AND BROUGHT VERY MANY TO JESUS.
 HE PEACEFULLY FELL ASLEEP AUGUST 4TH, 1864,
 AGED 48 YEARS.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD HE WAS WHAT HE WAS.
 HIS BODY RESTS IN ARDWICK CEMETERY;
 HIS RANSOMED SPIRIT IS WITH THE LORD;
 HIS MEMORY
 DWELLS IN THE LOVING HEARTS OF THOUSANDS.

THIS TABLET IS REARED BY HIS FELLOW-WORKERS AND THOSE
 FOR WHOM HE LABQURED.

“HE THAT WINNETH SOULS IS WISE.”

Since Mr. Darling's death his sister, Mrs. Borrowdale—the wife of Mr. Anthony Borrowdale, who has long been a devoted and much beloved superintendent of the school—has been

also called away. She strikingly resembled her brother in sweetness, spirituality, and fervent zeal. The following address to the teachers, delivered by Mr. Hopkinson, and communicated to me without the least knowledge of my writing on these matters, places the character of Mrs. Borrowdale in an interesting light. It seems to consist of notes for the address; but it will tend to confirm what I have written respecting the affectionate attachment of the Teachers to one another, and to their Sunday school. The writer of the address is still one of its superintendents.

“*Sunday, August 13, 1882.*”

“MR. BORROWDALE, our dear superintendent, is in *sore trouble*; and with his sons and daughters is mourning the loss of the wife and mother. Let our first thought be one of *true sympathy with him* and his in the trial which has darkened their home and hearts. *Eighteen years ago* we mourned the loss of George Darling. All strangers read his monumental tablet at the head of the school. Eighteen years include the *life of the majority* of those who are here. Most of you only know Mr. Darling by hearsay. *Go back* with me to a still earlier period—forty years ago. Miss Darling was a teacher in our school, which then assembled under the chapel; and some of the friends who are with us to-day remember her loving words

spoken to them when members of her class. As the *wife of our dear superintendent*, Mr. Borrowdale, her sympathies and prayers have always been with us here in our work, and whenever she had the opportunity she gladly undertook service in connection with our school. The singing of our school hymns was a source of pleasure to her, and it was rare indeed to miss her loving presence at Christmas time or Whitsuntide when our special hymns were sung. During the latter part of her illness a musical instrument in the street played through the tune which we sometimes sing, 'The Sweet By-and-by.' The dear ones who watched by her, seeing her eyes were closed, thought she was asleep, but when the tune was finished she gave expression to the pleasure she had experienced in listening; and when all about her thought her too weak for the effort, she sang almost through the verse.

"She *loved to see the children* passing her house on the way to the school, and always followed them with her prayers, for she specially longed and prayed for the children, that they might love Jesus in their young days; and some of her last whisperings were intercessions on behalf of the scholars and teachers who assemble here. She felt and appreciated very highly the sympathy and remembrance of dear friends here in their classes and at the throne of grace, and sent many grateful messages to all who had thought

of her and felt for her. For some time Mrs. Borrowdale's health has been failing, and her last illness has been a long and sometimes painful one. At first she had a clinging to life, but as she plainly saw that this was not God's will, she was enabled to say, 'Not *my* will but *Thine* be done.' She said one day to me, 'Is it wrong to wish for life?' for she was tenderly attached to her husband and children. As her last hours were approaching she could assure her loved ones, who were around her, that she felt 'Safe in the arms of Jesus.' At twenty-five minutes past eight on Tuesday night her loving God called her to Himself, and on the 4th of August, exactly eighteen years after the death of her dear brother, George Darling, she was laid by her brother's side in Ardwick cemetery, and we think of her to-day at rest in the Father's house.

"Mrs. Borrowdale was truly good, and very *gentle* and humble. Her life was uneventful—a quiet, unobtrusive fulfilment of her duties of wife, mother, friend; a gradual meetening for the glorious change which she realizes. May we all be followers of her as she followed Christ, and of all those 'who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.'"

My greatly-valued friend, Mr. Hopkinson, the writer of the foregoing interesting statement,

is the present and much honoured mayor of Manchester. He has been connected with the Rusholme Road School from his early youth, and is still one of its superintendents, and a revered deacon of the Church. His sons are well known as eminently distinguished by their scientific and literary attainments, and their high positions in the Universities of which they are members. The four sisters of Mr. Hopkinson were also among the most beloved and devoted teachers in the school, and I cannot deny myself the gratification of alluding to them. Two of them have fallen asleep in Jesus, one of whom, Mary, was the wife of Charles Tubbs, Esq., of Plymouth; the other, Alice, the youngest of the four, was the wife of H. O. Wills, Esq., of Bristol, one of the most respected Nonconformist names in the kingdom. Both of them were unspeakable blessings to their families, and have left sweetly fragrant memories behind them in the extensive circles in which they moved. Of the two sisters who survive, Ellen, the eldest of the four, is the admirable wife of that faithful and highly-esteemed minister, the Rev. George Tubbs, Incumbent of St. Mary's, Reading. The other, Elizabeth, is the sorrowing widow of the late Alfred Rooker, Esq., of Plymouth,—a man of whom it is difficult to speak, except in terms of seeming extravagance. With a countenance and manners of almost feminine—not effeminate—delicacy, with high mental cul-

ture and refinement, there was united a disposition of such singular sweetness and loveliness that I can never think of him without recalling the words of Mr. Bright, pronounced in the House of Commons with reference to his friend Cobden, and applying them to my lamented friend, Alfred Rooker: "A gentler spirit never tenanted a human breast." But the prime beauty and lustre, "the ornament and crown" of all was his true, simple, manly, unswerving Christian character and life. It would require, however, many pages to depict it. More than once mayor of Plymouth, he held that office when the New Guildhall was opened, when he had the honour of receiving the Prince of Wales. On his universally lamented death, which was occasioned by fever caught in the valley of the Jordan, when travelling with his family in the East, his fellow-townsmen erected a beautiful statue near the Guildhall to perpetuate the memory of a man who they felt had been a distinguished ornament and blessing to their town.

Reference is made in the Report to a most interesting work carried on by "two young men from the Rusholme Road Sunday School, in one of the lowest and most degraded parts of the city." One of them, George Bellhouse, was about twenty years of age, a junior teacher, and a member of the Church; the other—of the name of James Charlton, if I recollect rightly—was about seven-

teen years of age, a scholar in one of the senior classes. The work had gone on a considerable time before it became known to Mr. Darling and others. He had several times missed George from the Sabbath evening services, and became anxious about it, especially as he found that George seemed reluctant to account for his absence. But after a while, further pressure and inquiry, followed by personal inspection, brought the matter to light. It appeared that the two young men had been talking about their obligations to Christ, and thinking whether they could not in some way make Him known to those who are "ignorant and out of the way;" but fearing that it might appear to others, and perhaps really be, unsuitable for *them* to attempt to do anything, they resolved to make the attempt as secretly as possible.

There was a district known as "Little Ireland," inhabited chiefly by Irish Roman Catholics. A town missionary had long endeavoured to gain access to them for the purpose of reading the Bible and distributing tracts; but they sternly resisted all his efforts, and at length drove him from the district. The two young men hearing of this, nothing daunted by his failure, determined to try that very district themselves: nor did they try it in vain: for whether owing to their youthful appearance, and to their bland and gentle manners, certain it is that, after much

prayer and repeated visits, they found the hearts of the rough Irish people surprisingly softened towards them, and that instead of angry resistance they were welcomed to the cottages, and allowed to leave their tracts everywhere. They had not, however, been long at their work, when a railway was pushed right through the district, its terminus covering the whole of "Little Ireland," and scattering the people in other directions.

They were not disposed, however, to abandon all attempt to do good because "Little Ireland" was broken up, so they at once set about seeking some other sphere of labour; and they soon found one in what is very truly described in the Report as "one of the lowest and most degraded parts of the city." Charter Street was the centre of a wretched neighbourhood, inhabited by the worst classes of society of both sexes—the very scum of gaol deliveries; and it was among these miserable outcasts that these zealous and courageous youths resolved to seek by their unaided efforts an entrance for the gospel. After going among the people for a little while, they found a cellar which the poor inmates were willing to let them, for a trifling consideration, use for a Sunday evening service. Their resources did not permit of their buying hymn-books, so they wrote out hymns on slips of paper every week, and distributed them among such of the people as could read; and by the glimmering light of a candle or two, these

youths carried on a religious service in this dismal cellar, which soon became and continued crowded to overflowing by poor creatures who had probably hardly ever before spent a Sunday evening in any other way than in idleness, debauchery, and riot.

When Mr. Darling had extracted from George Bellhouse some information respecting the movement, I was soon made acquainted with it; but we decided by no means to invade their desired privacy, nor to force assistance on them, fearing that it might prove more a hindrance than a help. It was thought desirable, however, to ascertain the facts more fully, and with this view, a valued friend, one dark Sunday evening, placed himself in a position close to the cellar, where, without being seen by the young men, he could hear and observe all that passed within. Deeply was he affected by witnessing the quiet order and earnest attention of the poor people, while one of the young men addressed them in the most simple and engaging manner on the things belonging to their peace. As he left his hiding-place at the close of the service, and walked down the street, he heard footsteps behind him, and turning round he found two men following him. They immediately said, "Don't be afraid, sir; we saw you leave the place where you had been standing, and we followed you because it is not safe for any gentleman to come along here alone: you would,

very likely, be hustled and robbed, so we thought we would see you safe out of the place." "I thank you very much for your kindness," he replied, "but who are you? Do you know the young men who have been holding the service?" "Ah, that indeed we do, and never can be thankful enough that they ever came among us. We were like the people we were speaking of; but it is different with us now, and so it is with many more besides. Many who had been many times in the New Bailey, and were always drunk when they were out, have left off all these things now, and are here every Sunday night, as we are, and at the Temperance Meeting in the week. Ah, it *is* a change with many of us." "But is it safe for the young men always?" "Safe? why, there are plenty of bad ones all about the neighbourhood still, but they all know these young men, and no one would think of doing *them* any harm—they wouldn't dare to do it, if they wished it."

This interesting work could not, however, be kept secret, and such encouragement and assistance were afforded as should remove any burdens without interfering with the young men's operations.

On the next New-year's day, when we held, according to our custom, a prayer-meeting of the congregation at seven o'clock in the morning, and which was always very largely attended, I met George Bellhouse accompanied by seven

men on their way to the meeting. "These are some of our friends from Charter Street," said George, as he presented them to me, with his face glowing with affectionate pleasure. "They had heard of our prayer-meeting and thought they would like to join us, and so they have come." They had come nearly two miles for that purpose. They were well dressed, looking really very respectable, and appearing exceedingly happy. They had been accounted some of the worst men of their bad neighbourhood, but were now "total abstainers," getting an honest livelihood, "clothed, and in their right mind;" and they represented many more who, like themselves, had experienced this happily transforming power of the gospel.

Looking at the interesting work of the devoted young men with its results, one is led to ask, "To what are these results to be attributed?" These youths had set about and conducted their work in the simplest and quietest manner possible. There had been nothing sensational connected with it, no puff, no exciting notices, no street processions, no music; they had gone among these rough and degraded people only with the Bible and tracts in their hands, and kindly and earnest words on their lips,—all unnoticed and unknown, except by the hitherto neglected objects of their sympathy. There had been no impulse as the effect of great gatherings and

loud noise, nothing in outward circumstances that would seem likely to arouse or to attract the class of people to whom they addressed themselves. Yet here are visible effects such as few are given to see as the result of many years' labour. Whatever else may be said about it, one cannot but see how God was pleased to honour their simple, humble faith and self-denying love and zeal, and their considerate and prayerful use of suitable means. The history of the Church and its ministries interpret and confirm, in a vast variety of ways, those ever-during words, "Them that honour Me I will honour." And do we not see in this instance another touching illustration of the great truth of which we need to be continually reminded, that it is not by human might or power of *any kind whatever*, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that men are to be "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God," and that, not only as the subjects of His grace, but also as its instruments and agents, "He has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and weak things to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;—that no flesh should glory in His presence?"

That disinterested friend of humanity, Mr. Cobden, when living in Manchester, had established a day-school on the British system in a

very destitute part of the town, not far from the district that had been known as "Little Ireland." He had got from London a master by the name of Webster. Mr. Webster was not only a well-qualified teacher, but also a person of high Christian character. He and his wife had been members of the Church under the pastoral care of my much revered friend, Dr. Joseph Fletcher, of Stepney. On coming to Manchester, they joined our fellowship; and he subsequently became one of our most valued deacons. Their eldest son, William, about fourteen years of age, was taken into Mr. Cobden's warehouse. William had been brought up by his pious parents in the fear of God. Before going to the warehouse one morning, he said to his mother, "Mother, I wish I had some better clothes, for mine look very poor beside those of the others in the office." "Well, my dear boy," his mother replied, looking very sorrowful, "I wish I could let you have some better, but I know your father can't afford it, and you know he never goes into debt,"—and the good woman could not keep in her tears as she said so. "Don't cry, mother," said the tender-hearted boy: "I am sorry I mentioned it. I don't want *fine* clothes, and if it would be good for me, you know God can provide me with some better ones. Don't you remember how He provided for the poor widow of Sarepta, and I am sure He will take care of father and you." As

she told me this years after, more than once, she used to say, "Oh, how ashamed I was to think that my faith was weaker than my boy's, but how thankful that he was able to teach me to trust as he did." "Well, William," she said, "your father and I will make it a matter of prayer." A few days after, William came home with a cheerful countenance, and putting a five-pound note into his mother's hand, said, "There, mother, I was sure God would provide me with suitable clothes." "Why, what is this, William? Where did you get this?"—almost half afraid to ask him, for it seemed too good to be believed. "Mr. Cobden came into the office to-day, and after a little while he spoke to me, and asked me how I was; and I thought he looked at my clothes, so I could hardly speak to him. And he very kindly asked after father and you; and when I began to cry—for I could not help it—he wanted to know what made me unhappy; so I was obliged to tell him about my clothes, and what you felt. 'Well, William,' he said, 'I esteem your father, and you have been a good, diligent lad; I had been thinking of raising your wages, and here is a five-pound note to begin with: you may have some clothes now; so cheer up, and be happy.'" This was just Cobden-like, noble-hearted man as he was; in private matters as in public, always thinking of the good of others, and devising liberal things.

After a year or two, William's health began seriously to fail, and he was shut up in his room for many weeks, but without keeping his bed. I often visited him, and found his mind being gradually withdrawn from worldly matters, and fixed on spiritual and unseen things. One day I said, "Do you feel unhappy, William, shut up so long in your room alone? Don't you often wish to get out, and go to the warehouse again?" "Oh no, sir," he replied, "I should like to go to the Sunday school and to chapel again, but I don't want to go out for anything else." "Then you are happy, are you?" "Yes, sir, very; I was never so happy before as I have been since I became ill." "How do you employ your time?" "With my Bible and my hymn-book," pointing to them as they lay on the mantel-piece. "Do you think you will get better?" "I don't know; but I sometimes think I shall not." "Are you afraid to die?" "No, I would rather die if I were sure I should go to Jesus." "Do you wish to go to Him?" "Oh, yes, very much." "Why?" "Because I know that He died to save my soul, and I wish to love and praise Him for ever." Then, fearing to weary him with more questions, I spoke of the certainty of Christ's receiving all who come to Him with their heart's desires, as he was doing; of Jesus having put these desires into his heart for the purpose of satisfying them fully: reminding him of many precious promises

which He has given for the encouragement of all who commit their souls to His keeping, and look for His saving grace. At another time he expressed, with much feeling, his gratitude to God for his early religious advantages, and also for his affliction; "for," said he, "if I had grown up in good health, perhaps I should have loved the pleasures of the world, and turned away from Jesus; it is good for me to have been afflicted." Calling the day on which he died, I found him in a most blessed state of mind, longing to depart and to be with Jesus, but he was able to speak but little. A short time after I had left him, a very marked change took place, and the family gathered around his bed, waiting for his evidently approaching end, when, as if suddenly gathering new strength, he asked to be lifted up; and throwing his arms round his father's neck, and then round his mother's, and then round those of his sisters' and brothers' successively, he said, "Oh, how I love you all!" And then, after a pause, his eyes seemed to brighten, and his look to be almost entranced, when he exclaimed, "Glory!" and again, with increased emphasis, "Glory!" and yet once more, as in a rapture, "Glory!" and fell back into his father's arms, his happy spirit having passed away to the realms of the glorified. Such was the blessed end of William Webster's young life, at the age of sixteen. He was one of the scholars mentioned

in the Sunday School Report. I preached with reference to it, for the benefit of the young people, from 1 Kings xiv. 13: "In him is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel."

Ellen Cave was another of those young persons whose deaths are noticed in the Report. She was the eldest of nine sisters, of whom five joined the Church during my ministry, and became very devoted and valued teachers in the Sunday school; and the four younger ones, I believe, have since followed in their footsteps. Their mother was a person of strong, good sense, and very consistent piety. She joined the infant Church not long after my settlement. Ellen was one of a class of little girls whom I met in the vestry weekly; and I have a very distinct recollection of her in the class, and of my concern about her, for she did not appear to feel that hopeful interest in good things which I thought some of the others did. But when the Holy Spirit becomes the Teacher, the profiting of the learner becomes deep and decided, if not always evidently rapid. So it was with Ellen; as she grew in years it became evident that the Lord was "leading her in His truth, and teaching her," for she became very seriously attentive to Divine things, and her character was manifestly being formed under the influence of "the truth as it is in Jesus." She was not strikingly demonstrative, but her disposition and habits

evinced a quiet steady thoughtfulness and devout sobriety, that won the esteem and confidence of all those pious persons who became intimately acquainted with her, and gradually she was looked to as the stay of the whole family. Ellen and her sisters were among the most useful and beloved of all the teachers. It was from a letter of one of them, Eliza, that a quotation has been made in these pages. Dear Ellen's illness was short, but it developed a depth and richness of Christian experience which surprised even those who knew her best; and as she drew near her end, her faith and hope and joy became singularly elevated. I regret that her utterances have not been preserved by me; but well do I remember how I listened to them with wonder and thankfulness, and how all the family were filled with consolation amid the sorrows with which they mourned her loss. Very dear to our hearts were the members of that excellent and amiable family.

The case of the young person who is said, in the Report, to have been long remarkable for his attachment to the service of God, and to have died repeating, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," I cannot bring to my recollection. As about that time I was frequently compelled to leave home for many weeks together, perhaps I was absent during his illness, so that to whom the description referred I regret that at this distance

of time I cannot be sure. But I could not bring myself to omit a notice of these interesting facts, as they appear to me very valuable testimonies to the importance of early religious training, and to the preciousness of "the Gospel of the grace of God." These three instances, it will be observed, occurred in the same year. Were it not that it might appear as if the writer were desiring to make an *exhibition* of the fruit of Christian labour, whether in the home, in the school, or in the Church, many more memorials of the grace of God, respecting both elder and younger people, might, of course, have been recorded; but these must suffice.

Looking at the Report, a marked feature of intelligence is apparent in the various institutions and operations of the Sunday school. The highest religious aims were kept constantly in view with regard to them all, but mental improvement, intellectual culture was not lost sight of. This seems evident from the "Mutual Improvement Societies" established among the young people, and vigorously sustained by themselves; from the libraries they had collected and were extensively using; and from the high-class serials they took in for reading. Their meetings and discussions were often very interesting and instructive, conducted as they were usually under the observation and guidance of the superintendent or one of the leading teachers of the school.

Among those teachers were not a few liberally educated and well-informed persons of sound religious character, who took a lively interest in the mental development of their young friends. And the attendance in large numbers of the best families of the congregation at the anniversary public tea-meetings connected with the school gave countenance and encouragement to all its proceedings. At these meetings, at which, of course, the pastor presided, as well as at the more general meetings of the congregation, *as such*, he advised his friends not to seek extraneous help—for instance, of the ministers of the town,—but to depend on their own resources. This he did, not to isolate them from other congregations, but to stimulate them to cultivate and exercise their own gifts and talents. There were many brethren in the congregation, as well as in the school, well qualified to speak in public. Distinct subjects were given them beforehand; consequently, their speeches were usually carefully prepared, and the result was, generally speaking, of a most animating, instructive, and stimulating kind.

All such things are common enough in the present day—perhaps, rather superabundant. But fifty years ago, they were, in some places at least, almost a novelty. It will hardly be believed now, yet so it was, when we settled in Manchester, there was not such a thing as a

congregational, or even a Sunday school *general tea-meeting* known in all the town, or, I believe, in all the county. There had, it is true, long been meetings of what were called "Congregational Juvenile Societies," presided over by the pastors, at some of which I attended, but never a general tea-meeting of the *congregation*; and when something of the kind was proposed to our friends, they wondered how it could be done. I had been accustomed to it at Portsea, under the presidency of my father, and had seen its good effects. However, no sooner had the friends caught the idea than their practical minds found the way to realize it. Tressled tables were soon provided; hundreds of crockery-ware purchased—manufactured for the occasion, with "Rusholme Road Chapel" stamped on them; busy hands were occupied in adorning the large school-room; hundreds of people gathered at the meeting; the speakers seemed to acquire new vigour and animation from the scene; and the whole affair was a great success. Soon after, a neighbouring Episcopal Church, Dr. Burton's, borrowed the adornments for a similar purpose, and tea-parties became popular all the town over.

It certainly cannot be said that the populations of the northern towns in general were distinguished for culture and refinement; yet there was a remarkable degree of really intellectual and practical energy stirring among the people.

Manchester and its neighbourhood has long been one of the chief centres of the social, commercial, and political life of the nation—in the van of all civilizing enterprise and improvement. In Manchester one of the earliest Mechanics' Institutes was established. In Manchester the first public Free Library was opened, under the presidency of Sir John Potter, the mayor, when the Earl of Wilton, Mr. Lytton Bulwer, Mr. Dickens, Mr. Thackeray, and other celebrities took part in the proceedings. In Manchester that most important, marvellously energetic, and at length gloriously successful organization, the Anti-Corn-Law League, was originated by six gentlemen, and there, in the old Free Trade Hall, which held, when crowded, some eight thousand people, those vast gatherings took place, ever and anon, at which Cobden, Bright, Fox, Villiers, Peyronnet Thompson, and many others were electrifying the thousands by their eloquence, and imparting a vital impulse to those great principles of political economy and international commerce which have proved such an incalculable blessing to this country, and will prove to be so, it may be hoped, eventually to the civilized world. In Liverpool and Manchester unitedly the first public railway was opened, when the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and the other Cabinet Ministers were present, and at which, alas! Mr. Huskisson, M.P. for Liverpool, was killed. And with regard to religious matters, it was in Manchester that the

London Missionary Society took a new start as to the rate of its contributions, by Mr. Hadfield suddenly rising at the annual meeting of the Lancashire Auxiliary, and saying, "Mr. Chairman, I am tired of the one-guinea system; I propose, sir, that we raise to-night a thousand pounds, and I will give a tenth of it." His challenge was accepted with acclamation, and in a very short time promises to that amount were laid on the chairman's table.

To live in Manchester was to live in almost constant excitement in connection with public affairs. I should have said it was a *glorious* city to live in but for the smoke, and damp, and dirt of the place. But smoke, and damp, and dirt, notwithstanding, it is now a noble city indeed, worthy of its national importance and world-wide fame. Long may Manchester continue to flourish, in commercial integrity; in all legitimate enterprise; in intelligent regard to the social well-being of all classes of its people; in every wise philanthropic project; in enlightened, just, patriotic, and truly cosmopolitan, political sentiments; and, above all, in the cultivation of the highest moral and religious principles and habits, *the true basis* of all sound political economy and all real national strength and greatness. Long may Manchester thrive and flourish, an honour to the empire, a blessing to the world!

CHAPTER X.

Personal experiences—Contention of brethren—Church trouble—Separation of friends—Overruling Providence—Letters of Mr. Hadfield—Domestic piety—Lady Hewley's charity—Personal friendship—Sheffield election—Lancashire Independent College—Review of the past—Mr. Hadfield's old age, illness, and death.

I HAVE long hesitated as to including in these memorials a record of the following circumstances; yet as I think it can hurt no one's reputation, and wound no one's susceptibilities, and as a review of those circumstances has often proved to my own mind a source of encouragement to the exercise of faith and patience in the course of my ministry to the present day, and as the narration may possibly be useful to some young brother under whose eye it may fall, I venture to give it.

I know the risk of detailing one's own experiences of an inner and spiritual kind; but we have high example for it. If David had kept his personal religious experiences to himself, locked up in his own memory, what a different book the

Psalms would have been both in quantity and quality from what it is! If he and the other psalmists, or the Apostle Paul, had been deterred from alluding to their trials and mental conflicts, to their tears and prayers, and to their faith, gratitude, and joy, by the fear of being thought chargeable with egotism and spiritual conceit, we should have been deprived of some of the most heart-affecting and heart-sustaining portions of sacred Scripture, such as the thirtieth, thirty-second, thirty-fourth, forty-second, fifty-first, one hundred and sixteenth, one hundred and thirtieth, and other Psalms of like character; nor should we have had such invaluable passages of the Apostle's writings as those contained in the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters of his second letter to the Corinthians, and allusions of a personal kind in many other places, that exhibit the grace of Christ towards him, and in him, in such strong and beautiful light, and which have rendered his experiences and his character such incalculably precious sources of edification and comfort to the people of God.

The trials of ministers are designed not only for their own personal benefit, but also to make them *experimental preachers and pastors*; for unless they are so, whatever their intellectual equipment and ability, however well furnished in a literary and critical point of view for Biblical

teaching and even practical instruction, the most precious qualification for their work will still be wanting. May it not be owing to a want of deep, rich experience of the things of God, of habitual and thorough spirituality of heart and character, more than from anything besides, that we have often so much reason to complain that our ministry is so sapless and fruitless? So, at least, I have sadly felt with relation to myself. Our one indispensable requisite is "an unction of the Holy One," the "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," *as it is also the one special need of the professing Church, even as the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh is the one great want of a thirsty world.*

Soon after my settlement at Manchester a contention arose between two gentlemen, leading members of the Church, occasioned by some circumstances connected with the Sunday school. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Hadfield, had been the originator of the chapel, and had been my kind friend from the time of my first visit to Manchester. Both of these friends, though taking different views in some respects of the matters in question, were undoubtedly actuated by worthy motives: but both adopted extreme opinions; and each of them became excessively tenacious of his own. They soon brought their dispute to the notice of their minister, each expecting his exclusive concurrence and support. His obvious

duty, however, was to point out to them in what respects it appeared to him that they were both partly right and partly wrong; which he endeavoured to do respectfully and kindly in frequent conversation and lengthened correspondence—a difficult thing to do wisely and effectually, when desiring to mediate between two excited disputants. Such was their mutual pertinacity that it required the utmost care and caution not to exasperate their feelings while treating them in a spirit of independence and impartiality. Both were good men; both, on the whole, meant well; both were of considerable, though by no means equal influence in the Church. The circumstances occasioning their dispute required deliberate and prudent consideration; and what was mainly needed on the part of the two gentlemen, was calm and respectful regard for each others opinions and motives, with a view to a brotherly and honourable adjustment of their differences. But each of them wanted a hasty, positive, and one-sided decision on the part of the pastor; and it soon became apparent that his independent and impartial treatment of the matter was exciting their displeasure, though neither of them evinced any animosity towards himself personally. But there was danger of party feeling growing up in the Church, and much prayerful and prudent effort became requisite to quiet the rising excitement of other per-

sons. There was one man, for instance, of a meddling and somewhat cantankerous disposition, who was determined, apparently, to make the worst of the matter, and at one of the conferences of our little Church, after much argument and remonstrance had been spent on him in vain, the pastor quietly and solemnly said in sorrow, not in anger, and with his grief very probably expressed in his countenance, "Well, my good brother, 'blessed are the peacemakers.'" The good man — for he was a *good* man, though not at all times of the loveliest temper—instantly fell beneath the power of the authoritative and gracious words of Jesus, and never from that moment, through the whole of the business afterwards, did he utter a syllable to wound or trouble the hearts of the brethren. There is nothing that has so much weight on the minds of the really pious as "Thus saith the Lord." Many a day of prayers and tears, and many a sleepless night of anxious thought did the painful business cost the young minister, for he could not but perceive from the immovable self-will of the two gentlemen what was likely to be the issue. And so it came to pass. Mr. Hadfield finding, at length, that the other gentleman was not inclined to yield to his undoubtedly too peremptory demands, and that the majority of the people did not concur with him, announced to his minister that he and his family, together with some other friends, had

decided to separate from the Church. This decision of his was indeed a heavy blow; for the Church was yet in its infancy; it was "a day of small things;" and the withdrawal of such valued friends seemed an almost overpowering shock.

But under this heavy trial the Lord did not forsake his servant or his cause. Next to concern for the welfare of the Church, the minister's most anxious solicitude respected his own state of mind and course of action; that he might be preserved from irritability and petulance, on the one hand, and from undue despondency on the other, by being kept in humble submission to the will of God, and quiet assurance of his mercy. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;" "Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil;" "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee;" "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because He trusteth in Thee;" "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength;" "Wait on the Lord *and keep His way*, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land,"—these, and similar passages, were constantly in his mind; and oh, how day after day did he read over such portions as Lam. iii. 21–36, and Heb. xii. 3–11, and Isa. xli. 10, and xliii. 2, and Psa. xlii. and xliii. ! Nor were they resorted to in vain. The Word of God and a throne of grace were indeed precious to him then. And he

would record it with profoundest gratitude, that though his heart was wrung to its very core, he was most graciously supported and strengthened throughout. He was never suffered to lose his affiance in the Divine righteousness and loving kindness; and as the trial increased in intensity and the crisis approached, his heart continued to grow in confidence and strength. When apprized that on the ensuing Sabbath his friends would publicly leave his ministry, he was enabled calmly to write his two sermons—*that* for the morning, from “Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, and teachest him out of Thy law;” and *that* for the evening, from “I have much people in this city.” But neither then nor at any other time was the slightest allusion made either in preaching or prayer to passing events. The minister had felt all along that those events had been directed by the chastening hand of his heavenly Father, and it was a relief to his spirit to meditate on the subject. Nor was the evening text chosen in any temper of bravado or presumption. Almost in spite of his natural feelings it filled his mind throughout the week, and he seemed as if *perforce* compelled to preach on it. On entering the pulpit he hardly dared trust himself to glance towards the vacated pews. But what was his surprise to find them *all occupied by strangers*, and still more, to learn at the close of the service that the strangers had chosen

those pews with a view to becoming permanent attendants. They were rather large families. One was that of Mr. Jackson, from Hull, to whom reference has already been made in these pages ; another was a highly reputable family from Nottingham ; and another equally respectable family from the immediate neighbourhood, of whom I had never heard before, and who, I believe, had never worshipped with us until that day. Some other persons occupied the other vacated pews, and all of them, or rather their descendants, for the heads of those families have passed away, continue our faithful friends to the present time. So I saw, and others saw, with adoring admiration, that “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity,” and that—

“Just in the last distressing hour
The Lord displays delivering power.”

From that time new mercies followed in quick succession, so that instead of that being the time of our Church’s overthrow, it became evident that “the time, yea, the set time had come to favour Zion ;” at least, we could not but hear in these remarkable circumstances a voice distinctly saying, “Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.”

A blessing there was in the events themselves. They taught the little Church to trust in the Lord rather than in man, and their minister, too, to lean more simply and confidently on the arm of his God than he had ever done before ; and while

they evidently tended to bind us all more closely together in the bonds of sympathy and love, we perceived that the same effects appeared to be produced on the minds of other Christians towards us. Never, surely, was a Church united in more thorough affection and harmony than was the constantly growing community at Rusholme Road Chapel.

It was certainly remarkable that the critical circumstances connected with the withdrawal of our friends never seriously disturbed the peace of the Church. Silence had been preserved as much as possible during the whole affair, and was still maintained after the friends had left. Scarcely any conversation did the pastor hold with the people with reference to it—and none whatever with persons outside of the Church and congregation—except in expression of such sentiments as might lead them to “rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him,” while endeavouring to excite in them an increasingly earnest and practical concern for the prosperity of Zion. Nor were the bonds of love severed as between the Church and those who had withdrawn; certainly, between those friends and their former pastor there seemed very little change of the relations in which they had stood to one another, and none at all of friendly intercourse. And then after a few years, the pastoral and Church relationships were renewed by Mr. Had-

field and his family, in a truly Christian and cordial spirit. "The thing was of the Lord." And now that our honoured friend has passed to his rest, it is with no small pleasure and gratitude that we review our continued friendship with him and his family through the course of half a century.

Mr. Hadfield had his peculiarities, but he was uniformly characterized, and that in the highest degree, by simplicity and integrity of Christian principle. No influences or inducements of any kind could make him swerve by a hair's breadth from what he believed to be the path of duty. Sometimes, no doubt, this stern, unbending integrity gave to his decisions and proceedings an appearance of self-will and ruggedness of temper; and that there was, in fact, something of self-will mixed with his conscientiousness can hardly be questioned. His sanguine expectations, and his eagerness to realize the great objects on which he had set his heart and to which he was bending all his energies, were apt to render him less patient with the hesitancy of more calculating minds, and less tolerant of what might seem to him a want of earnestness and zeal than was desirable both for his own peace of mind and for the promotion of the ends which he had in view. He wondered how any persons could halt or hesitate in the prosecution of aims that appeared to him to be so evidently just and good. I had scarcely made his acquaintance when I heard him

speaking at a meeting at Mosley Street Chapel. A friend of his, a deacon of that Church, Mr. Richard Roberts, a singularly deliberate and sturdy man, had expressed some doubts as to a proposal before the meeting. Mr. Hadfield followed him; and referring to the objections urged by Mr. Roberts, he said, "All the difference, Mr. Chairman, between my friend and myself is, that he usually can see all the difficulties, and I can never see any of them." Nothing could be more strikingly characteristic of the two men. The resolute, strenuous straightforwardness with which Mr. Hadfield pressed on to the accomplishment of his designs was such as could be displayed only by a man of the greatest force of character, and that force of character was inspired and ennobled to a degree that was really sublime by *the fear of God*. That sacred and lofty principle ruled him in all circumstances, domestic, social, religious, political, and it ruled him through life. My friend and early schoolfellow, Mr. Edward Miall, told me that just before he rose to deliver his last, and, as it proved, his most important and successful speech, in the House of Commons, on the "Establishment Question," Mr. Hadfield stepped to him, and quietly but earnestly said, "Fear God, Mr. Miall; you have nothing else to fear;" "and," added Miall, "those words of Hadfield at that moment seemed to impart real strength to my spirit." One member of Par-

liament exhorting and encouraging another after this sort, in presence of an important public duty, is something worth looking at.

The following sketch of the life and character of Mr. Hadfield, which appeared in the *Manchester Examiner and Times* in the week after his death, will show the estimation in which he was held, and also throw light on some of the allusions contained in his letters:—

“Mr. Hadfield was in his ninety-second year, having been born in December, 1787. He came of a Derbyshire family long settled at Glossop, but his birthplace was Sheffield, the borough which he so long represented in Parliament. His father, Mr. Robert Hadfield, had been in business there as a merchant. George Hadfield, on leaving school, was articled to an attorney (Mr. Sherwood) in his native town. Soon after being admitted as a solicitor, in the year 1810, he commenced practice in Manchester. For the first two years he was in partnership with Mr. Knight, but during the rest of his professional life, with a brief exception, Mr. Hadfield practised alone, or in association with his sons. He relinquished his business to them from about the time of his first election to the House of Commons, in 1852. He was married, in 1814, to Lydia, daughter of Mr. Samuel Pope, of Cheapside, London, and had a family of three sons and five daughters.

“Before long Mr. Hadfield came into note, both as a professional man and as an active sharer in the public movements of that time. He obtained a very large and lucrative business as a conveyancing lawyer, his engagements multiplying with the extension of Manchester itself during the first half of the century. In this respect his biography is bound up with an important chapter in local history.

“A strong feature of Mr. Hadfield’s career as a lawyer was the extent to which he was employed in the interests of the religious denomination to which he belonged. In that behalf he would have been a zealous labourer by force of convictions, even if the advantage of professional talents had not been his to contribute to the cause. It is not many years since he ceased to be a recognized leader of the Independents, and he remained to the last a munificent supporter of their chapels, schools, and other foundations. At the opening of the new library and assembly room of the Independent College, Withington, in September, 1878, the visitors were reminded that Mr. Hadfield had laid the foundation stone of that building nearly forty years before. He was then in the full tide of his many engagements as a public man and a man of business; and it would be difficult to turn over any local newspaper or record, for years before that time, without finding frequent mention of him in both capacities. He

assisted in the proceedings necessary for the enfranchisement of Manchester as a parliamentary borough, and at the first election he seconded the nomination of Mr. Poulett Thomson. Mr. Hadfield was also one of the founders of the Anti-Corn-law League, and a liberal contributor to its funds, though he was not very prominently engaged in its demonstrations. Before the foundation of the Independent College at Withington he had been for many years the treasurer of the similar institution at Blackburn.

“To trace the rise of Mr. Hadfield’s great influence among the Nonconformists, however, we must go back considerably more than half a century. It was in the year 1825 that Mr. Hadfield and one or two coadjutors edited a volume entitled ‘The Manchester Socinian Controversy,’ setting forth the facts of the alleged diversion of a large number of Presbyterian chapels and Nonconformist charity funds from the purposes contemplated by their founders. The contention was that ‘Trinitarian principles’ had been set aside by Unitarian trustees, into whose hands, during the lapse of more than a century, the control of the estates had passed. Lady Hewley’s Charity was a typical case, which was for a long time before the public, and Mr. Hadfield was the chief originator of the litigation on the subject. The work above named had foreshadowed the course that was likely to be

taken, and contained a list of 'Presbyterian Chapels in the hands of Socinians.' It had for frontispiece a portrait engraved from a picture, in Mr. Hadfield's possession, of the Rev. Henry Newcome, who was warden of Manchester Collegiate Church in 1662, when the Act of Uniformity expelled him and made him the minister of a dissenting congregation, for whose use the Cross Street Chapel was first established. It was in connection with this same chapel that the circumstances arose which, in part at least, led to the publication in question. What has been elsewhere spoken of as 'a meeting of the leading Socinians in Lancashire' was held at the Spread Eagle Hotel, in 1824, in honour of the Rev. James Grundy, of Cross Street Chapel, at which that gentleman was presented with a handsome testimonial, and after dinner one of the speakers declaimed against 'the spirit of orthodoxy' in a way which caused great resentment when the report of it appeared in a newspaper. The report, and the public correspondence which it provoked, were reproduced in Mr. Hadfield's book; and from that time the alleged alienation of endowments was contested with greatly increased determination.

"Mr. James's * history of the litigation and legislation thus arising does no more than justice

* T. J. James, Esq., solicitor, Birmingham, the worthy son of the late Rev. J. Angell James.

to Mr. Hadfield in saying that 'he risked a large fortune, and spent a small one, in the cause.' The agitation was not brought to a definite conclusion till the year 1844, when the Act of Parliament commonly called the Dissenters' Chapels Bill was passed. Mr. Hadfield's exertions during those twenty years were too numerous to be specified, but the Manchester Free Library contains at least one other literary example of them. It is in the form of a tract, printed by the late Mr. Prentice, in 1829, under the authority of 'The Annual Meeting of Ministers and Representatives of the Independent Churches of Lancashire.' The *brochure* comprised a reprint of that portion of a report of the Charity Commissioners which related to Lady Hewley's bequests, with copious annotations by Mr. Hadfield, a perusal of which would give a good idea both of his legal acumen and of his polemical zest. Lady Hewley, as some readers may care to be reminded, was the widow of Sir John Hewley, Knight, a leading promoter of Nonconformity in the seventeenth century. By her will, dated 1707, the widow devoted a valuable property in the neighbourhood of York for the creation of a trust fund in aid of the education of ministers, and for kindred objects. The sentiments of the Hewleys, it was insisted, 'were Calvinistic and Trinitarian.' A bill was therefore filed in the Court of Chancery by Mr. Hadfield to remove the foundation from

the control of Unitarian trustees, and they were eventually dispossessed. The final decision of the House of Lords against them was not delivered, however, till 1842. The protracted litigation of the matter was one of the grounds on which the Government of the day were induced to carry through the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844. The full title was 'An Act for the Regulation of Suits relating to Meeting Houses and other Property held for Religious Purposes by Persons Dissenting from the United Church of England and Ireland.' It was stated in the House of Lords when the bill was under debate that the law expenses in the Hewley case had reached £30,000, and that there were at least two hundred similar suits in contemplation for the purpose of ousting the trustees of charity funds. In a great number of cases the title deeds were invalid, through having been executed at a time when Nonconformity was wholly illegal. The Act of 1844 was designed to give them retrospective validity. Wherever they were not specific as to the religious doctrine and mode of worship to be observed, it was further enacted 'that the usage of a congregation for twenty-five years immediately preceding any lawsuit should be taken as conclusive evidence.' With the recollection of this remarkable statute, and of the prolonged controversy which preceded it, Mr. Hadfield's name is inseparably connected.

“Elected as M.P. for Sheffield in 1852, Mr. Hadfield retained his seat for that town in the five successive Parliaments down to 1874, when he retired. In 1835 he had unsuccessfully contested Bradford, on which occasion his opponent was Mr. Hardy, whose son, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, was lately ennobled as Lord Cranbrook. At the general election of 1857, when Mr. Hadfield was returned a second time for Sheffield, he and his Liberal colleague, Mr. Roebuck, were presented with an address signed by 15,000 electors, expressive of their continued confidence. On that occasion they were unsuccessfully opposed by a Conservative candidate, Mr. Overend. At the general election in 1865, Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Hadfield were again victorious in a contest at Sheffield, the other candidates being Mr. T. Campbell Foster and the Hon. Stuart Wortley. Mr. Hadfield was prevented from being present at the declaration of the poll, as he had come to Manchester, to support by his services as a committee man, and also by his vote, the candidature of Sir T. Bazley and Mr. Jacob Bright. In the course of one of his electioneering speeches Mr. Hadfield is reported to have summed up his political creed as follows: ‘He wanted to call into political existence four millions of men, taxpayers, but debarred from the rights of the franchise. He wished to put an end to all religious distinctions before the law. He also

desired to develop the mighty resources of India.' In 'Dod's Parliamentary Companion' he was described as having voted for the ballot in 1853, as a supporter of the peace movement and of financial reform, and an opponent of all religious endowments, as well as of the union of Church and State. At his final election for Sheffield, in 1868, he was returned, along with Mr. Mundella, Mr. Roebuck then losing his seat.

"Mr. Hadfield's course as a politician was consistently Liberal, both before and after his entrance into the House of Commons. If he ever erred in the estimate of those with whom he generally acted, it was in his inflexible adherence to ideas of abstract principle which the bulk of his party believed to be impracticable. In regard to the education of the people, for instance, Mr. Hadfield stood out for purely voluntary effort, and for religious teaching universally. He was therefore in opposition alike to the advocates of secular plans and to any State-supported system whatever. On that question he was in active alliance with Mr. Edward Baines, and strongly divided from Mr. Cobden. If all the supporters of voluntary methods had been as earnest and open-handed in the cause as Mr. Hadfield himself, their principle would doubtless have triumphed, to the satisfaction of all concerned. In the promotion of law reform and of religious liberty he was

more successful, if not more strenuous, than in his efforts for public education. He gave great help in the passing of the Common Law Procedure Act of 1854, by which the practice of the superior courts was almost entirely remodelled. He introduced the last Act relating to the registration of judgments, and promoted numerous bills on the law of mortmain, Admiralty Court practice, &c., &c. The 'Sites' Bill of 1868 was one of his measures. Another was the Qualification for Offices Bill, in 1864, one of the effects of which was the release of mayors of boroughs from the last relic of ecclesiastical tests in behalf of the State Church.

"This notice of some public affairs in which Mr. Hadfield was concerned can give but an imperfect idea of his vigorous personal qualities. With a sympathetic nature beneath an habitually quiet though sturdy exterior, and with a demeanour that was courteous and unassuming, he could be very stern and fiery in the assertion of principle. Though little given to platform speaking, and utterly destitute of an orator's power, he would imperturbably hold his ground when he believed it the duty of others to hear him. His long life had brought him finally into contact with a generation to which some of his cherished ideas might seem an uncomfortable survival from antiquity, as when he sought to shut out organs from places of worship. But his benevolence was

as real as his sense of duty was devout and strict. Instances have been reported of highly chivalrous exertion on his part for the redress of individual wrongs. There was a simplicity in his way of expressing himself which adds something to the interest with which his departed figure may be remembered. When Mr. Cobden's death caused instant discussion how the statesman could be best commemorated, in bronze or marble, it was characteristic of Mr. Hadfield to exclaim, 'Let us give richly to those who are bereft; let us make the widow's heart sing for joy.'"

The following letters, selected from a considerable correspondence, may tend to throw light on some aspects of his character which possibly may have been but little observed. Some of them are introduced as showing the kindness of his heart as a personal friend; some as evincing his earnest interest in the spiritual welfare of his family; and some as alluding in his own earnest way to social and public affairs; while all bring out his faithful adherence to the highest and noblest principles. No one reading those letters, brief as some of them are, can fail to notice how consistently and naturally true Christian sentiment and feeling are interwoven in nearly all of them, like a tissue of gold. "God in history;" His sovereign authority; His universal dominion and all-pervading providence; His firm and immutable purposes; His absolute righteousness;

together with His unspeakable and boundless mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Mediator,—all these great and elevated topics were themes of his frequent meditation, they imparted strength to his spirit amidst the many arduous labours and trying anxieties of his lengthened life, and preserved his mind in serenity and peace in the prospect of entering the eternal world. It is specially observable how long and how seriously he had been accustomed to keep the close of life in view, and to be habitually preparing for it.

The letters are given in the order of their dates.

“MANCHESTER, *October 23, 1843.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Many thanks to you for your kind letter of the 11th inst., and to Mrs. Griffin for her remembrance of us. We regretted the absence of you both on the occasion of our dear daughter’s marriage; for it seemed to want you, the service being in a place so nearly associated with you, and with so many recollections of a pleasant kind; and not unmingled wholly with others of another sort. It went off very well; we had a singularly fine day for it, and we had the cheering countenances of many friends, who joined with us in commending the parties concerned to our covenant God.

“I regretted your absence. I was sure *you* would have welcomed us, with the heart of a pastor and a brother. We recollect the time when you received our beloved daughter into the Church, and when I had the sublime pleasure of handing to her the emblems of the love of her Lord.

“These things were not forgotten. And it is a very great mercy that she has there been united to one who loves her, and whose principles and character assure me that he will be the guardian of her happiness. Isaac Crewdson * called at our house, and with apostolic beauty and simplicity, poured out a blessing upon them. I was not present, but he attended to see them married, and I had pleasure in introducing him to Mr. Heyworth’s † father. The married

* Isaac Crewdson, Esq., the leader of the “Evangelical Friends,” one of the saintliest of men, and a beautiful example of the pure simplicity and large benevolence so characteristic of that class of Christians. He was the father of Mrs. Waterhouse, referred to in a former page. This lady and her family, and other families of the Crewdson name, were among the most valued and endeared members of our community. We were gratified by observing how cordially the Evangelical Friends who had joined our communion fell in with our Church principles and order. One of their number, Mr. Thomas Simpson, became an eminently generous and devoted deacon, and his amiable wife and family, together with himself, unswervingly faithful friends of the minister and his wife.

† Lawrence Heyworth, Esq., a gentleman of polished mind and manners, and marked devoutness and earnestness as a Christian. After his marriage to Mr. Hadfield’s eldest

couple are now in Scotland, but the weather will probably hasten their return.

“I am much concerned to hear that your health is not yet established, especially as winter is approaching. I earnestly pray that you may soon be restored. For myself, I have often prayed that God might spare me and give me grace to do the work of a long life in His service, if it be His will. May He grant me this favour.

“The world needs all we are enabled to do for it, but God can do without us; but it is a great honour to be allowed to do anything to further His cause. We are in good hands, and He is the great Pilot at the helm of the world’s affairs.

“The account of Mr. Coward’s* success at Hatherlow is very encouraging. The hearts of the people seem to me to be quite prepared for him, and I expect good things from his ministry, and soon. The chapel fills, and the spirit and attention of the hearers excellent.

“The college, our great concern, needs all our

daughter he settled at Hatherlow, Cheshire. He was the son of Ormerod Heyworth, Esq., of Liverpool, a respected deacon of Mr. Kelly’s Church.

* Mr. Thomas Coward, then recently ordained as pastor of a Church at Hatherlow, Cheshire. Frequent ill-health compelled him after a very few years to resign the ministry, to the deep regret of his people, by whom he was “highly esteemed in love for his work’s sake.” His father, who was an honoured deacon of our Church, and Mrs. Coward—so beautifully exhibiting “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,”—together with their estimable family, can never be forgotten by us.

prayers and all our ventures; but things look well in the best sense. The student preached well in the right strain. There are ten subscribers of £50 each, and if we can increase this number to twenty, the work will be made easy in that department of it, which is an anxious point at present. I am going to Liverpool to-day about it, to see what they can do there for it.

“Mrs. H. and family unite in kind regards to Mrs. Griffin and yourself.

“Excuse this ill-written letter.

“I remain, my dear sir, yours very truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.”

“MANCHESTER, *December 4, 1847.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Accept my thanks for your very kind letter, and for all your attentions to my young people. It is a cause of thankfulness to see them walking in the truth, and I trust they will be witnesses for God when we shall have passed away, and entered into rest. Such a family as ours is, is necessarily the occasion of very great care and anxiety, and they have been children of very many prayers, both at home and elsewhere, but the Divine Arm is almighty to save.

“I am gratified to enrol my children in the Church assembling at Rusholme Road Chapel, and under your ministry, which was selected by themselves freely and without restraint of any

hand from any quarter. If I mistake not, it is now in the twentieth year of your acquaintance with Manchester. You arrived at a time when all that could be said was it was the day of small—very small—things indeed. The chapel was up, but the work was only to begin, and was waiting, if I may so say, your arrival. In all my various engagements of any sort for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, I reckon this to have been the most arduous, and the severest test to faith and patience. It seemed to me at times to be overwhelming, and with my professional and family engagements, and very few helpers, the work seemed too great for me. You have had your share of trials also, and to you and those who flocked around you the work itself was assigned, and, by your instrumentality, ‘what hath God wrought!’

“I rejoice with you most sincerely, and join in ascriptions of praise to Him to whom all glory is due. The place is now become one of the lights of this town and vicinity: may it shine brighter and brighter, and may your life, and health, and usefulness, be prolonged and enlarged more and more. A ‘hewer of wood and a drawer of water’ seems to be my office and place in the best of all causes, and I assure you that ‘as life is drawing nearer to its close,’ as you justly observe, my love to that cause, and the blessed truths and principles it embraces, becomes greater;

as indeed they will very soon be everything to us all.

“I trust the time will come when the rest of my family will follow in the path already marked out by their sisters. In these vital matters I feel perhaps impatient, as if ‘nothing were done whilst anything has to be done;’ but ‘my times are in His hands’ and I wait His will.

“Remember us all to Mrs. Griffin and all your relatives.

“I remain, my dear sir, yours very truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“To the Rev. James Griffin.”

The next letter alludes to the election of a “beloved physician,” Dr. Browne, Mr. Hadfield’s son-in-law, to the deaconship, and shows Mr. Hadfield’s scrupulous regard for the independent action of the Church in connection with such a matter.

“MANCHESTER, *October 27, 1848.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Let me beg your excuse for not responding to your call last night, and, possibly, for a little apparent abruptness, in consequence of our being, all of us, by previous arrangement, on the move, when you spoke to me.

“I wished to be private, to prevent any appearance of being influenced by any partiality towards

our esteemed friend, one of the elected deacons, at this particular juncture.

“We wished the voice of the Church to be properly exercised, free from all personal considerations, and I believe it has been. My estimable friend does not owe his appointment to us, for I believe we all voted for other brethren, so that there might not be the least appearance of a family compact. I need not, however, add that in doing this it was in a spirit perfectly consistent with our good opinion and good feeling towards him.

“Excuse this little explanation, and believe me, my dear sir,

“Yours very truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“To the Rev. James Griffin.”

The following brief lines may be read with some interest in connection with the notice of the litigation respecting “Lady Hewley’s Charity,” extracted from the Manchester newspaper. Through eighteen harassing and wearisome years, amidst innumerable obstacles on this side and on that, had this important cause been “dragging its slow length along;” and in view of its conclusion it is difficult to imagine the varied emotions that must have filled the mind of him who had, by his persevering energy, mainly sustained this protracted suit, as he hastened from

the Court to communicate its result to his minister and friend.

“LONDON, *June 7, 1848.*”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“It is with grateful feelings to Him, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, that I have to apprise you that Lady Hewley’s Charity Suit has been decided in our favour.

“It is declared to be an English charity for orthodox dissenters *alone*, and the costs of both parties paid out of the fund.

“Mr. Bethell’s reply to-day occupied the Court four hours and a half, and for beauty and force and eloquence I never heard it surpassed.

“Excuse an amanuensis and so short and hasty a letter, as I am only just returned from Court.

“Please inform Mr. Gwyther, as I have no time to write him.

“Yours truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.”

“VICTORIA PARK, *November 18, 1849.*”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Yesterday’s interview convinced me that a change of scene is absolutely necessary to your speedy recovery. Away from your study, and even from the sight of your library, and, with Mrs. Griffin, removed from old occupations, and from business of all kinds, with home comforts, good air, and a little locomotive power at com-

mand, you may do better than all the physic in the world can do for you.

“I think your medical adviser, who knows his way here, would agree with me. Now all these advantages I can offer you and Mrs. Griffin, and a hearty welcome.

“You know my house is half emptied, and the half of its usual tenants yet remaining, would be delighted to attend you both, and to have your company.

“Let me therefore recommend you both to make trial of us for an entire month—less would not do my prescription justice. I may possibly be from home for a few days, and this would leave you quieter, and increase the favour to us by your company, in taking charge during my absence. Altogether it seems just the thing for us both, and both sides shall be free and easy.

“Recollect you did once try my house for a few weeks, and did not find it very bad.

“To give this treatment fair chance of doing you good, you must have no business, see no other friends than mere callers, and few of them. You must not preach, and even family service must be under my feeble conduct. Let it not be told where you are.

“You can walk in the garden in fair weather when you please, with as good air as you will get anywhere, and ride out for an airing at pleasure.

“With a blessing, these means may do wonders

for you, and much better than at the usual places of resort for invalids.

“When shall I send for you and Mrs. Griffin, and your luggage?”

“I remain, dear sir, yours truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“To the Rev. James Griffin.”

“MANCHESTER, *July 10, 1852.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Thank you cordially for your very kind letter, and I beg you will remember me at the footstool of mercy at all times.

“There has not been, I assure you, any flinching of principle at Sheffield,* and few, if any, have been returned from such a constituency on such great truths. It has been a very noble struggle for such a noble prize.

“I exult in having so many men returned of very decided principle and piety. May the Good Shepherd guide and direct us all, and help us to bear testimony in high places!

“I am very conscious, however, of personal incapacity and growing years; but I trust He will not leave nor forsake me until my work is done.

“Kind regards at home.

“Yours truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“Rev. James Griffin.”

* His first election for Sheffield.

“7, MANCHESTER BUILDINGS, WESTMINSTER, *April 5, 1853.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Time, with its sharp teeth, has brought us two years nearer our home and rest, since I had the pleasure of addressing you on the chapel extension scheme.

“I regret it has not obtained more extensive support, though something has been done. Our excellent friends, Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Poore, have devoted themselves to the work in a way that deserves our best thanks. I fear they are but weakly supported and strengthened in the work, though I am sure you and others have done what you could do for the object. Still the work languors.

“Our secretaries are ‘faint, yet pursuing.’ I once was able to give personal effort to such an undertaking, but circumstances now prevent. The County Union meeting is to be at Manchester next week, and it occurs to me whether you can bring on the subject more at length, and try again what can be done.

“At all events let me, most respectfully, suggest a conference with the secretaries; and that some arrangement be made to bring the business on at the meeting. You would find Dr. Raffles a very able adviser and coadjutor in the matter.

“I would almost implore, and with more than common earnestness, that the matter be pressed

on the minds and consciences of God's people in Lancashire. Just consider the rapidity with which the last two years have fled away, and that we have not many times two years to spend in the world.

“Our opportunity for usefulness is slipping out of our grasp so quickly that we cannot say how soon we may lose it; and, I must add, how powerless and insufficient we are to avail ourselves even of what we have.

“I date as above, but I have stepped out of the House to give vent to my feelings, so excuse this hurried epistle.

“I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“Rev. James Griffin.”

“4, ECCLESTON TERRACE, BELGRAVE ROAD, S.W.,

“LONDON, *July 14, 1857.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Many thanks for your kind letter. It gave me and Mrs. Hadfield very great pleasure to hear from you, and I shall be glad to hear that your health will enable you to labour in the great and good cause to which your life is devoted.

“You have no doubt heard of the troubles of the Lancashire Independent College. I must confess to you I felt very deeply in the trial which it has undergone. The labours of that institution ought to be brought to bear effectually

ally upon the immense masses of people around it. At one period of its history I had determined to devote my life to its service, but my Master had willed it otherwise. My present sphere of labour is, however, for time, but your calling is to labour for eternity. I appreciate the difference, and devoutly wish you every prosperity and comfort in your work. We shall soon reach the house appointed for us, and let me earnestly hope, we shall dwell for ever in our Father's house made without hands.

“Let us be willing to work whilst it is day, and never be weary of our spiritual armour, until our blessed Father call us to Himself.

“God bless and prosper you. Remember us all kindly to Mrs. Griffin. Can we persuade you to come and see our exhibition of beautiful paintings? I am sure it would gratify you and repay the journey. We should be most happy to see you, and offer you every accommodation we can render you at Victoria Park.

“I remain, my dear sir, yours truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“Rev. J. Griffin.”

“SOUTHPORT, *September 24, 1866.*

“MY DEAR SIR,

“*Thirty-seven* years seems a startling number in any person's life. Your first visit was in 1828, the year after our great missionary collection at Mr. Roby's chapel; the year of the

repeal of the test law; and the year before Catholic emancipation. You remember the struggle for reform, and the first Manchester election, 1832. Events so important and so rapid have followed, that the world looks like another and different world. I am much rejoiced to hear of the success of your ministry at Hastings. We (self and daughter Mary) have often proposed a visit to Hastings to see and hear for ourselves, but my health and engagements have so far hindered, and any spare time I have spent in attention here to one so much and so long and deservedly loved, who is so much reduced in her constitution, and is, doubtless, so near glory, but possibly not nearer than ourselves.

“I trust we (self and daughter) may have an opportunity of visiting Hastings, next spring, but as I enter on my eightieth year, on 28th of December next, if spared so long, I am cautious of making engagements. The feebleness of years affects me much. I have wondered how and for what I have been kept so long, especially after the illness I had seven years ago, which you will remember.

“It seems as if parliamentary duties refreshed me, but this cannot be always the case. I am glad you liked the ‘Narrative,’ and I have ordered two hundred and fifty copies to be circulated at the Union meeting at Sheffield, October 8th. Altogether I have had one thou-

sand copies, and I have ordered five hundred more.

“I sent Mr. Reed a copy, and if he or you wish any friends to be supplied they shall be furnished with copies by post, if names be sent me in good time.

“It will not surprise me, if the new Government bid for office by giving liberal measures, however inconsistently.

“Lord Derby is weakened by the repeated attacks of gout, and evidently did not like to take office, but was obliged to do so by his party. My bill * was a small measure, but a good one as

* “In the spring of 1863 there was a long and most interesting correspondence, between the bishop [of Oxford] and Mr. Gladstone, on Mr. Hadfield’s Qualification for Offices Bill, now long since passed into law. It is introduced by the following letter from the bishop to the Bishop of Salisbury :—

““Yesterday, at Windsor, Gladstone settled on me quite fiercely to secure my support of Hadfield’s bill for doing away the declaration of mayors, etc., that they will not use their municipal offices against the Church. Gladstone says it is no security, it is a mere ban fixed of dissenters, etc. “If you will not give up this you will give up nothing,” etc. I replied, “Why should we give it up? We gain nothing instead. It is no stigma, it is simply saying, There is an Established Church, and whilst, in the fulness of our tolerance, we admit all dissenters to all places, we make them assert that they will not use their municipal position against the Established Church.” Then I said, “All the real supporters of the Church will look upon it as desertion.” Now, will you weigh this matter, and tell me your mind? I hate thus thwarting him.’

“This letter sufficiently indicates the tenor of the correspondence with Mr. Gladstone, which however does not appear to

an *educator*, and good to have the Tory venom spent on it in both Houses. What can be thought of the prelates? I confess to a very strong dislike to see them in the House of Lords, where they constantly do mischief.

“I hope better and more blessed fruits in our ministry than you fear. You know how entirely and anxiously I concur in your evangelical and doctrinal sentiments.

“We are undergoing a very exciting state of transition, for which allowance must be made. It always comforts me to remember that the great and good Shepherd is at the helm of His Church. As Dr. Owen said, when dying, the loss of an under-rower in the ship of the Church will not be felt, so let us leave Him, the great Head of the Church, to vindicate His sovereign rights. ‘*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.*’ I hope you have read Robert Hall’s sermon on this text.

“Our duty is, and our desire should be, and I trust is, to work ‘whilst it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.’ Our fifty new chapels (twenty, 1851; and thirty, 1862) are nearly complete, and I hear good accounts of our college; and though I am myself driven out of that work, I wish the college success.

have changed the bishop’s views on the subject; and two years later, when the question was finally disposed of, Mr. Hadfield’s bill passed the House of Lords without a division.” (*The Liberator*, Feb. 1, 1883, “The Wilberforce Revelations.”)

“I have overlooked what I should mention, that the great Hewley Charity suit began the *year after your ordination*, and the charity is doing good, and is fairly administered.

“An exciting session may be expected next year, and I shall be thankful if spared to take part in it. You will easily know the course I shall pursue, if allowed to be a co-worker in it.

“Many unwise things I have done, but I think I never committed myself to a bad cause. Your father’s sermon was excellent, and you have been faithful to the truth and assuredly will be *until death*.

“I desire so to watch that when ‘the Bridegroom cometh and knocketh at the door, I may willingly and joyfully open it *immediately*.’

“My limits of life, which I cannot pass, must be near at hand. To live is Christ, but to die is gain.

“My dear wife joins in kind regards to Mrs. Griffin and yourself.

“I hope she (Mrs. Griffin) is quite well, and as useful as ever to you. May she be long spared to you.

“I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“Mary sends her kind regards to Mrs. Griffin and yourself.

“Rev. James Griffin, Hastings.”

"9, GLOUCESTER STREET, WARWICK SQUARE, PIMLICO, S.W.,

"LONDON, August 3, 1871.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"By book post I send you copy of a curious Act, which we, *Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons in Parliament*, with the Queen's consent, have passed, to prescribe what prayers, lessons, etc., etc., shall be used in all churches, until our further pleasure is known. We, aforesaid, are a curious mixture of people to govern such a community, on terms which most, or many, of us would not submit to for an hour. Can you explain how this happens? I suspect there will be a rebellion some time, and as I have rebelled myself long ago, I do not see how I could consistently punish the rebels—can you?

"An honourable friend of mine told me you had lately inquired for me at the H. of C., and I regret I did not see you.

"I forget the place he represents.

"Yours truly,

"GEO. HADFIELD.

"Mary unites in kind regards to Mrs. Griffin and yourself.

"It is very hot to-day.

"Rev. James Griffin, Hastings."

“23, LUPUS STREET, BELGRAVIA SOUTH, S.W.,

“*March 10, 1873.*”

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Your welcome favour reached me in course, and my daughter and myself were glad to hear from you, and of Mrs. Griffin.

“Life seems like a shadow, and is ever on the wing; yet wonderful events have happened since your ordination in 1829. Rusholme Road Chapel is still in activity, and it would gratify you to see the four or five hundred members at the Lord’s table on sacrament days, good schools, and a fair congregation. I think Mr. Clayton and I are the only aborigines, and a few Sundays ago several of the grandchildren of Mr. Crighton, our first deacon, joined us at the ordinance.* I am turned eighty-five, and I am told I am the only survivor of the first subscribers to the Bible Society in Manchester.

“I hear good accounts of the L. I. College, with forty students. I send you by post the ‘Lancashire Congregational Calendar,’ containing an account of it and other proceedings. Mary and I are intending to drive some day soon to see the Memorial Hall now building to com-

* These allusions furnish interesting evidence of our friend’s continued attachment in his old age to the good people of the Church. Mr. Clayton and Mr. Crighton were its faithful helpers from its earliest days to the end of their lives, and the staunchest of friends to the pastor and his wife, through sunshine and cloud, to the close of their ministry.

memorate the Confessors of 1662, and to form rooms for all our societies for home and foreign work, and to which Mr. Mills contributes £10,000. Also Dr. Parker's City Temple near it, and Mr. Newman Hall's new chapel, in substitution of Surrey Chapel.

“The subscription of £10,000 to Mr. Miall is nearly complete. These particulars may not be new to you, but they may interest you. We are perplexed in the House of Commons by the University of Dublin Bill, which has had two nights' debate, and is to have another to-night, and a division and a debate to-morrow. If the Government be defeated they will resign, the Tories will come in and probably dissolve, and I shall retire after *twenty* years' parliamentary service.

“I look with deep interest on future events. A new life of the world seems to be ‘looming in the distance.’ With God's blessing and new *spiritual* life given, it seems to me as if the earth is ready ‘to give her increase’ to all men, in all parts of it. Is this a dream, or will peace be given? May God give peace to the world!

“I have to leave on earth a large posterity to represent me. At present I have eight sons and daughters, thirteen grandchildren (five left by Anne), and three great-grandchildren.

“It concerns me to hear of your retirement and the cause of it, and the difficulty in writing.

You would enjoy the visits to Dr. Guthrie, a man deserving of all you have said of him. The *Illustrated London News* of yesterday has an excellent likeness of him.

“You may be sure I am become infirm, chiefly in my feet, and I retire as much as I can from public engagements.

“I thank you for all your kind and Christian counsel and good wishes.

“You once told me of good Rowland Hill saying, with one foot in heaven and the other exposed to the tempter on earth, he should not feel safe until the other had reached heaven also, or to that effect.

“Sad indeed - would be the ruin of an old believer, but, ‘blessed is the man that feareth always.’ And what our blessed Lord taught us, ‘What I say unto one *I say to all*, watch,’ is as instructive as ever. God preserve us from wrecking our souls or causing dishonour to Him, or wrecking the souls of others. He will not leave or forsake us. The blessedness of *early* piety is joyful in *old* age.

“We are dependent on our Father as much now as ever, and He never wearies of us, or shuts out our prayer.

“We have talked of a visit to Hastings, and at present cannot decide; but whether or not we meet again on earth, I rejoice in the hope of meeting in glory to part no more.

“My daughter joins in kind regards to Mrs. Griffin and yourself.

“I remain, my dear sir, yours very truly,
“GEO. HADFIELD.

“To the Rev. James Griffin, Rusholme Lodge, Hastings.”

“CONYNGHAM ROAD, VICTORIA PARK, MANCHESTER,
“November 3, 1873.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Allow me to thank you for your visit to us recently.

“We regretted we had not the pleasure of entertaining Mrs. Griffin and yourself during your stay in Manchester.

“You kindly referred to our long acquaintance and the approaching limits of life which I am near, and the probability we may seldom meet again, if indeed we should meet again.

“Solemn thoughts arise out of these considerations, and the mind naturally revolts at the cutting of earthly ties and intercourse.

“Yet there are pleasures in taking *retrospective* views of the way which God has led us, and blessed us with opportunities of serving Him.

“And *prospectively* we have joys which surpass all human calculation or imagination.

“The battle is not over, nor the victory won, but He, whom we serve, has promised never to leave or to forsake us.

“Never were we more dependent on Him, for

goodness and grace, and indeed for His patience and forbearance.

“I heard you preach *twice* on ‘God is love;’ but you did *not* exhaust your subject, which is *inexhaustible*.

“On this we may cast anchor, and believingly obtain peace for time and eternity.

“My daughter Mary remains at Great Malvern, but she is in much improved health. Kind regards to Mrs. Griffin.

“I remain, dear sir, yours very truly,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“To the Rev. James Griffin, Hastings.”

“CONYNGHAM ROAD, VICTORIA PARK, MANCHESTER,

“June 26, 1878.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I am much obliged to you for your kind remembrance as expressed by your letter.

“Your advent in Lancashire was attended by important circumstances still fresh and vivid in my mind.

“Now, in the 91st year of age, I am obliged to employ my welcome amanuensis.

“The banquet of 1828 * comprised four hundred guests, and the editor of the *Nonconformist* describes me as the only survivor, except, I believe, Mr. S. Morley, then a stripling. I regret I cannot go into detail as I could wish.

* To Earl Russell, to commemorate the abolition of the Corporation and Test Acts.

“Please present my kind regards to Mrs. Griffin, who is, I hope, likely to be spared to minister to your happiness many years.

“I remain, my dear sir, very truly yours,

“GEO. HADFIELD.

“Mary desires her very kind regards.

“Rev. J. Griffin, Rusholme Lodge, Hastings.’

The following beautiful and touching letter of Miss Mary Hadfield, his “welcome amanuensis,” who lived constantly with him and soothed his declining years by her affectionate and devoted attentions to the very last, together with the remarks of the Rev. Dr. Thomson at his funeral, as just as they are eloquent, will appropriately close our notices of our venerable friend:—

“CONYNGHAM ROAD, VICTORIA PARK, MANCHESTER,

“April 30, 1879.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“Accept very grateful thanks for both your kind letters, and especially for your wish to have been present at the funeral of our dear father. The day was so gloomy that, however true and great the pleasure of seeing you would have been, we may be reconciled to your absence, as we should have felt anxious for your health.

The severe winter tried my father much, and

before Christmas he was so poorly that Dr. Browne did not think he could recover. He rallied, came downstairs, drove out, when the last and second sickness came on.

“I remember hearing you say that however privileged they may be with whom ‘sudden death is sudden glory,’ a last illness is often a ripening time to a Christian. This was peculiarly the case with my father’s sick-bed: his faith was generally firm, and a humility, softness, sweetness of character came over him, which, in anticipation, my unbelieving heart would have thought impossible.

“In the early stage of the last illness I read, as a treat, pages from the sermons of Robert Hall, whose writings he so much admired years ago. His majestic sentences, however, failed to engage attention, and he expressed a preference for Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons. Then one of these was too much—half a sermon sufficient; then, as he went deeper down into the valley, a hymn and text was as much as he could bear—sometimes, perhaps, more than he could take in.

“The evening before he died his affectionate, devoted nurses dared not touch him, he was so feeble. But he took what was offered him in the night and early morning. Jennings could not get him to take his breakfast; knocked in great distress for me. Stimulants were given in vain; the poor eyes closed, the heavy breathing ceased;

‘we scarce could say, *He’s gone*’! ‘Lord Jesus, receive his spirit!’ was all that could be uttered. The great mystery of the spirit’s flight was there. ‘In vain the fancy strives to paint it.’

“We are grieved to hear that Mrs. Griffin has been so poorly. I hope the coming summer will fully restore her to health.

“For your kind, generous references to my dear father, which are greatly prized, once more accept grateful thanks, as well as for all you say to cheer me. Lucy unites her true love with mine to Mrs. Griffin and to you.

“Believe me, dear sir,

“Very respectfully yours,

“MARY HADFIELD.”

“The preliminary service in the schoolroom was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Thomson, who, after reading some passages of the Scriptures, gave a brief address. He described the late Mr. Hadfield as a venerated friend, to whom they had looked with grateful respect, and as the oldest member of that Church, the founder of their sanctuary, and an honoured leader in the cause of religious freedom and progress. They had not, he continued, to bewail a life wasted in idleness and self-indulgence; they had not to lament great promise early disappointed, purposes broken off, a career unfinished, a structure half reared and deserted. They had to praise

God for the unwearied improvement of large resources, devoted to the best ends, carried on throughout the greater part of a century with steadfast and consistent purpose, marred by no instability, or faltering, or care for self-interest. They admired the fabric of a strong character, based on pure, stern principles that stood unshaken in storm and sunshine. They glorified the Source of all good for what His grace wrought in His servant, enabling him to fill up each stage of his long career with services to the cause of righteousness and mercy, and that he was permitted in so many instances to rejoice in seeing the accomplishment of the objects he sought, and the triumphs of the principles he loved. Of those principles in the darkest hours he was never ashamed; he never despaired of them; his heart was ever full of buoyant hope, inspired by the faithfulness of God. They could say of him with truth, and they thanked God for it, 'Here lies a politician, an honest representative of the people, who cared not for party or for fame, but solely for the interests of the great toiling masses of his countrymen; a patriot who sought the good of other nations as well as his own, who served not for place or pension or power, but for the approval of his own conscience and his Lord; a Christian who loved the Gospel and the children of God above all shibboleths and sectarian distinctions; in short, a man who

lived not for himself but for his kind, and who claimed nothing as of merit, but ascribed all to grace. He died as he lived, calm and strong in soul, self-abased, magnifying his Saviour, trusting and glorying only in the cross, and longing to be with Christ.' Might they all imbibe his spirit of simple, severe, unostentatious fidelity. Let them learn from such examples as his that the living core and strength of their Nonconformity lay in practical godliness, in estrangement from the world, in habitual communion with their Divine Redeemer. Let them take up the standard which he had laid down, and bear it aloft above the changing fashions and frivolities of the age. Then life, whether long or short, would be noble and fruitful in blessing, and death would crown it with the great recompense of reward." *

HASTINGS.

Fain would I say something with regard to our beloved brethren and friends in Hastings and the neighbourhood. But to write all that memory fondly cherishes with reference to those only who have entered into their rest, would demand another volume ; and if I were to speak of those who survive as one's heart would dictate, I could never look them in the face again. We cannot

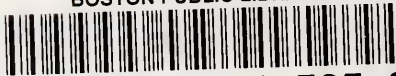
* *Manchester Examiner and Times*, April 26, 1879.

be sufficiently thankful to the gracious providence that brought us to this salubrious and lovely place, and fixed our lot here so many years—a place in which we have experienced and witnessed so much of the Lord's goodness to ourselves and to His people, and in which also we have been introduced to the friendship of many valued Christian families and individuals from different parts of the country, and of various sections of the Church of Christ. A happier association of Christian ministers and people does not, I suppose, exist in the kingdom. Many persons who have had considerable opportunities of observation have testified the same. We ourselves have felt surrounded on all sides by an atmosphere of love; it has been, in this respect, Manchester over again—and this is saying much.

What we have witnessed of the grace of God in the character, labours, and usefulness of His servants—ministers, deacons, and others, male and female, elder and younger—has been to us a source of unspeakable thankfulness and comfort; and though we can be of little or no service to them now, this at least we can say of them, “they are in our hearts, to live and to die with them.”

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